
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
An Roinn Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

Freedom of Information Act 2000

**Department of Health, Social
Services and Public Safety**

Publication Scheme

16 June 2006

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this document, which sets out the publication scheme of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (“the Department”), is to facilitate greater public access to information held by the Department. It details information which is available now or will be available in the future, where the information can be obtained from, the format it is available in and whether the material is available to the public free of charge or on payment. This publication scheme is operational from 16 June 2006, updating the scheme which was introduced on 30 November 2002.

2. **About the Department**

2.1 The administration of the Department is organised under the Permanent Secretary, Dr Andrew McCormick, into several groups and one executive agency. The groups are:

- Primary, Secondary and Community Care Group
- Planning & Resources Group
- Strategic Planning and Modernisation Group
- 5 Professional Groups, namely:
 - Medical and Allied Services
 - Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Group
 - Social Services Inspectorate
 - Dental Services Group
 - Pharmaceutical Advice and Services Group

and the executive agency is the Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Estates Agency (known as Health Estates).

2.2 The Department also has responsibility for other Non-Departmental Public Bodies, for example, the Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland and the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland, but these bodies have produced their own publication schemes.

3. **Background to the Freedom of Information Act 2000**

3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000¹ (“the Act”) received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. A ‘public authority’ is defined in the Act, and includes but is not restricted to central and local government, non-departmental public bodies, the police, the health service and schools, colleges and universities. Any person making a request to a public authority for information since January 2005, must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and, subject to exemptions, supplied with that information.

3.2 Individuals already have the right of access to information about themselves under the Data Protection Act 1998¹. As far as public authorities are concerned, the Freedom of Information Act has extended this right to allow public access to all types of information held.

4. **Publication Scheme**

4.1 Every public authority is required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it intends to publish the information, and whether a charge will be made for the information. The purpose of a scheme is to ensure a significant amount of information is available, without the need for a specific request. Schemes are intended to encourage organisations to publish more information pro-actively and to develop a greater culture of openness.

4.2 The Information Commissioner is responsible for the approval of publication schemes and enforcement of the Act. The Information Commissioner post combines regulation of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

4.3 Under section 19(1) of the Act every public authority is required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme, to publish information in accordance with its scheme and, from time to time, to review its publication scheme.

¹ See Her Majesty’s Stationery Office website (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk) to view a copy of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

4.4 Under section 19(2) of the Act a publication scheme must specify:

- (a) classes of information that the public authority publishes or intends to publish;
- (b) the manner in which information of each class is, or is intended to be, published; and
- (c) whether the material is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.

4.5 Under section 19(3) of the Act a public authority, in adopting or reviewing a publication scheme, must have regard to the public interest in allowing public access to information held by the authority and in the publication of reasons for decisions made by the public authority.

4.6 The Department has again considered its statutory equality obligations for this publication scheme under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Equality Commission's screening criteria have been applied and there is no evidence of significant implications on the equality of opportunity duty within the terms of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Therefore, there is no requirement to carry out an equality impact assessment on this publication scheme.

5. Responsibility for this Publication Scheme

5.1 The senior manager responsible for this publication scheme is the Director of Personnel and Corporate Services. The Departmental Information Manager, Michael McArdle, has responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the publication scheme and his address details are given later in paragraph 9.1 of this document.

6. The Department's Publication Scheme

6.1 The Department's approach in determining the classes to be included in this publication scheme has been to be as open as possible and aims to cover all aspects of the Department's work. The aim is to publish as much information as possible taking into account possible exemptions and the Data Protection Act 1998¹. It

would be the Department's intention to review this publication scheme again by 31 March 2008, or sooner if appropriate.

6.2 This publication scheme specifies:

- (a) the classes of information it will publish or which it intends to publish,
- (b) the manner in which the information of each class will be published, or is intended to be published, and
- (c) whether the material available to the public is, or is intended to be, free of charge or on payment

6.3 Classes of Information – The classes of information have been drawn up by the Department to help ensure easy access by the public to available information. However, some classes of information may contain information that may be subject to an exemption (under sections 21 to 44 of the Act) and these have been identified, for example, where personal data or security is involved.

6.4 Publication of Information – Information already published, or intended to be published, is, or will be, available in different formats. The formats available may depend on the information requested and normally will be in either electronic or printed form. Documents which are published on the Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) are also generally available in printed form.

6.5 Charges for Information – Information downloaded from the Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) is free of charge. Other information, for example, in a bound and printed format that is provided within the publication scheme may be charged for at the appropriate rate. The publication scheme shows whether or not a class of information contains some chargeable material. However, the Department reserves the right to make a charge to cover the administrative costs of, for example, providing multiple copies of documents, which otherwise would be provided free, or retrieving information from archives.

6.6 The Department makes available its key documents on audio tape and in Braille, Irish and Cantonese and it will make this publication scheme similarly available. The Department will also

consider requests for translations of the publication scheme into other minority ethnic languages.

6.7 The supply of information under the this Scheme does not give the recipient or organisation that receives it the automatic right to re-use it in any way that would infringe copyright, although it may be reproduced for the purposes of private study or research. This includes, for example, making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public. Permission to re-use the information must be obtained in advance from the Controller of HMSO who has responsibility for the licensing of Crown copyright material. For further details on how to apply for a licence please see: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/index.htm>.

7. Finding what you are looking for

7.1 A large amount of information is already available on the Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) and information can be accessed directly from the website. However, alternatively if you wish to request information shown in this publication scheme you may do so by writing directly to the appropriate Local Information Manager (see Annex 2) whose reference number is shown beside the information you are requesting. Your request for information should include:

- your full name and postal address including postcode;
- details of the information you are requesting from the publication scheme; and
- the way in which you would prefer the information to be sent to you (for example, a printed copy or by e-mail).

7.2 Annex 1 of this document contains examples of what information is, or will be, available and where it can be, or will be, obtained. Within Annex 1 you will find details of information alongside a more detailed description of the information, the format it is available in, whether there is a cost in obtaining that information and, in some cases, additional comments to provide clarification. Each item of information has a reference number of a Local Information Manager, whose contact details are shown in Annex 2. The Local Information Manager may be contacted about the information you are requesting.

7.3 If you have any difficulties in contacting the appropriate Local Information Manager listed in Annex 2 you should contact the Departmental Information Manager (whose contact details are given in paragraph 9.1) who will seek to assist you with your request for information.

7.4 If the information that you want is not contained within the publication scheme then you may wish to make a request under the Act. If you wish to make a request for information under the Act, please contact the Departmental Information Manager whose contact details are given in paragraph 9.1.

7.5 Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) in the Cabinet Office have responsibility for the publication of UK legislation including Acts of Parliament, Statutory Instruments, Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland and Explanatory Notes to Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly. For this reason, full details of legislation for which the Department has policy responsibility are not in this publication scheme but details of legislation are featured on HMSO's Publication Scheme with details of where you can view or purchase the documents. The HMSO website (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk) is where all newly enacted legislation can be viewed.

8. **Classes of Information**

8.1 This publication scheme contains information which is available now and it has been organised into 6 groups, namely:

- Group One – Organisational Structure
- Group Two – Policy and Planning
- Group Three – Finance
- Group Four – Internal Guidance
- Group Five – External Guidance
- Group Six – Research and Statistics

8.2 Classes of information within these groups have been set out to help you find the information you are looking for. The organisation of the groups and classes is detailed below in the following paragraphs. Some classes of information may contain information which may be subject to exemptions under the Act, and examples of these have been identified.

8.3 Group One – Organisational Structure: Information explaining the Department’s organisation – Classes:

Organisational structure <i>except, for example, where personal data is involved</i>
Description: Organisation charts and some job descriptions showing the structure of the Department
Availability: The Department’s website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, e-mail
Cost: Free of charge

Services provision
Description: Leaflets, brochures, newsletters, agreements detailing current Departmental activities and services currently provided by the Department
Availability: The Department’s website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, e-mail
Cost: Some chargeable material

8.4 Group Two – Policy and Planning: Information on Departmental policies and plans – Classes:

Corporate and Strategic Plans <i>except, for example, for the formulation of government policy</i>
Description: Corporate and strategic plans setting out the Department’s current high level aims and objectives
Availability: The Department’s website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post
Cost: Free of charge

Business Plans
Description: Business plans of Directorates within the Department setting out their aims and objectives and work for the year
Availability: Post, e-mail, the Department’s website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) and Departmental Library
Cost: Free of charge

Summaries of minutes of meetings *except, for example, for the formulation of government policy or where personal data is involved*

Description: Summaries of meetings of the Departmental Board and other senior level meetings will be available within 4 weeks of being agreed. These summaries are normally agreed at the following meeting and will not include exempt items, for example, personnel issues or matters concerning development of Departmental policy not yet finalised.

Availability: Post, e-mail

Cost: Free of charge

Strategies and Action Plans

Description: Details of action plans developed to implement strategic decisions including targets and model schemes

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, e-mail

Cost: Free of charge

Reports and Consultation documents *except, for example, information provided in confidence*

Description: Copies of consultation papers issued by the Department, subsequent responses (excluding responses sent in confidence) and reports following on from the consultation process

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, e-mail

Cost: Free of charge

Press Releases

Description: Press releases issued by the Department

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post

Cost: Free of charge

8.5 Group Three – Finance: Information on Departmental financial matters – Classes:

Annual accounts
Description: Published Annual Accounts
Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post
Cost: Some chargeable material

Internal Financial guidance <i>except, for example, where a commercial interest is involved</i>
Description: Guidance issued to staff and managers on financial issues
Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, The Stationery Office
Cost: Free of charge

External Financial guidance
Description: Guidance issued to HPSSPS bodies, students, voluntary organisations and others on financial issues
Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, The Stationery Office
Cost: Some chargeable material

Health, Social Services & Public Safety Bodies Expenditure <i>except, for example, where a commercial interest is involved</i>
Description: Details of Expenditure regarding voluntary bodies and Health, Social Services & Public Safety Bodies
Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), Post
Cost: Free of charge

8.6 Group Four – Internal Guidance: Information on policies, procedures and practices under which the Department operates - Classes:

Personnel <i>except, for example, where personal data is involved</i>
Description: Guidance issued to staff and managers on personnel issues
Availability: Post
Cost: Free of charge

Information and Communications Technology *except, for example, where investigations or proceedings are involved or where a commercial interest is involved*

Description: Guidance issued to staff and managers on information and communications technology issues

Availability: Post

Cost: Free of charge

Training and Development *except, for example, where a commercial interest is involved*

Description: Guidance and training material issued to staff and managers and current training plans

Availability: Post, e-mail

Cost: Free of charge

Health and safety *except, for example, where the physical or mental health or safety of an individual is endangered*

Description: Guidance issued to staff and managers on health and safety issues

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post

Cost: Free of charge

Complaints *except, for example, where personal data is involved*

Description: Guidance issued to staff and managers detailing internal complaints procedures

Availability: Post

Cost: Free of charge

8.7 Group Five – External Guidance: Information on policies, procedures and practices setting out how the Department wishes others to conduct their business – Classes:

Professional advice *except, for example, where the physical or mental health or safety of an individual is endangered or where personal data is involved or where a commercial interest is involved or where investigations or proceedings are involved*

Description: Guidance from professional groups to HPSS professionals and others including, for example, advice on dental, nursing, pharmacy services and those working with children

Availability: The Departmental website, post, e-mail

Cost: Some chargeable material

Health and Safety *except, for example, where the physical or mental health or safety of an individual is endangered*

Description: Guidance issued to HPSS bodies on health and safety issues

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, The Stationery Office

Cost: Some chargeable material

Public appointments

Description: General information, procedures, nomination forms and codes of conduct for the nomination of persons for public appointments

Availability: Post

Cost: Free of charge

8.8 Group Six – Research and Statistics: Information on research and analysis carried out by the Department on its activities –

Classes:

Annual Reports

Description: Annual reports from business areas *except, for example, where personal data is involved or where a commercial interest is involved*

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, The Stationery Office

Cost: Some chargeable material

Statistical surveys *except, for example, where personal data is involved*

Description: Statistical surveys on Health and Social Service matters carried out for the Department

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post

Cost: Some chargeable material

Analysis reports *except, for example, where personal data is involved*

Description: Analysis of Health and Social Services matters carried out by the Department

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post, e-mail

Cost: Free of charge

Monitoring of Health and Social Services

Description: Current monitoring and reporting on Health and Social Services activities including performance tables

Availability: The Department's website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), post

Cost: Free of charge

9. Feedback, Comments and Complaints

9.1 Feedback and comments on this publication scheme are welcomed and should be addressed to:

The Departmental Information Manager
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Room A3.5b, Castle Buildings
Stormont
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST
BT4 3SJ

E-Mail address: DIM@dhsspsni.gov.uk

9.2 If you have a complaint about this publication scheme you should write or send an e-mail to the Departmental Information

Manager at the above address. The Departmental Information Manager will investigate your complaint and provide you with a reply, normally within 20 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

9.3 If you are not satisfied with the reply from the Departmental Information Manager you should then contact the Director of Personnel and Corporate Services who is the senior manager responsible for this publication scheme. The Director of Personnel and Corporate Services will investigate your complaint further and provide you with a reply, normally within 20 working days of the receipt of your notification of dissatisfaction with the reply from the Departmental Information Manager.

9.4 In all cases the Department will undertake to investigate your complaint fully and will try to resolve any matters raised as soon as possible within the resources available to it. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction after your reply from the Director of Personnel and Corporate Services you may refer your complaint on to the Information Commissioner who is independent of the Department. However, before you refer the matter to the Information Commissioner you will have to have used the Department's complaints procedure first. The Information Commissioner's address is:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

9.5 More information about the Freedom of Information Act 2000¹ can be obtained from the [Information Commissioner's website \(www.ico.gov.uk\)](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Example of details of published information

Document	Group (Class)	Description	Availability	Cost	LIM Number
Departmental Resource Account for DHSSPS	Finance (Annual Accounts)	These contain information concerning the accounts of the DHSSPS for the year ending 31/03/05	View Online	N/A	10
Northern Ireland Framework Specification for the Degree in Social Work	External Guidance (Professional Advice)	This sets out a comprehensive set of learning requirements for the degree in social work	View Online	N/A	13
Chief Medical Officer's Report (2004)	Research & Statistics (Annual Reports)	This report addresses many of the health challenges faced in Northern Ireland. The facts and figures will serve as a future reference for the state of health of the people of Northern Ireland.	View Online	N/A	1

ANNEX 2

Directorate	Name	Extension	LIM Mailbox:
Child Care Policy	Ann Mooney	22131	LIM18@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Corporate Services HEA	Bernie Gray	23789	LIM5@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Dental	Liam McGuckin	20212	LIM17@dhsspsni.gov.uk
DIS	Ann Donnelly	42260	LIM25@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Estate Policy	Alan Loughlin	23709	LIM16@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Family & Elderly Care	Dean Looney	22471	LIM7@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Finance	Stephen Popplestone	89694	LIM10@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Health Development	Stephanie Tallentire	20784	LIM3@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Health Estates	Gilbert Cromie	23855	LIM22@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Human Resources	Chris Wallace	20672	LIM12@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Information & Analysis	Claire Shortt	22043	LIM20@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Internal Audit Group	Michael White	52633	LIM6@dhsspsni.gov.uk
ITG	Joe Quinn	22994	LIM9@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Medical & Allied	Dr Heather Neagle/ Helen Reynor	22359 20720	LIM1@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Mental Health & Disability Services	Roy Keenan	23484	LIM2@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Modernisation Unit	Alan Urquhart	22349	LIM23@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Nursing	Olive Smith	23102	LIM15@dhsspsni.gov.uk
OHS	Ann Toner	51715	LIM21@dhsspsni.gov.uk
OPS	Neil Magowan	20519	LIM11@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Personnel & Corporate Services	Cathy McMullan	20070	LIM19@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Pharmaceutical	Alex Haffern	28624	LIM8@dhsspsni.gov.uk
PPMD	Patricia Swann	22259	LIM26@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Primary Care	Robert Kirkwood	20245	LIM14@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Regional Strategy & Public Safety	Colin Dunlop	22652	LIM24@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Secondary Care	Joe Magee	89617	LIM4@dhsspsni.gov.uk
SSI	Dorothy Vance	20517	LIM13@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Support Services Unit (ODS)	Patricia Blacker	23184	LIM27@dhsspsni.gov.uk