



**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000
ADJUDICATOR'S OFFICE PUBLICATION
SCHEME**

PART 1

Introduction

- The Adjudicator's Office (the Office) was set up in 1993 to investigate complaints about the way the (now former) Inland Revenue and the Valuation Office Agency deal with people's tax and valuation affairs. The Office now also considers complaints about HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), which includes the former Inland Revenue and the former HM Customs & Excise, as well as the Office of the Public Guardian, and The Insolvency Service.

The Adjudicator's Services are free to complainants and she works independently of the organisations that she investigates.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 became law on 30 November 2000, and was fully implemented on 1 January 2005. The Act does 2 main things.

- The Act will give individuals a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, although there are some exemptions from that right. The Act replaced the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, commonly called the Open Government Code, which remained in place until the Act was fully implemented.
- The Act also imposes an obligation on Public Authorities, including the Adjudicator's Office, to bring a Publication Scheme into effect, which must be approved by the independent Information Commissioner (see below).

Individual requests

The Act applies to all types of recorded information held by the Office regardless of the date of the information. The Act does, however, set out some exemptions to this right. Anyone will be able to make a request for information under the right of access, although the request must be in writing. Unless the information falls under one of the specific exemptions in the Act, you will be entitled, on making a request under the right of access to this Office:

- to be informed in writing by the Office on whether it holds information of the type you requested and, if that is the case,
- to have that information given to you, where possible, in the manner you have requested, for example as a copy or summary, or you may ask to inspect the record.

The Act sets a time limit for dealing with a request for information. The Adjudicator's Office will have to respond to requests within 20 working days. The Act also provides for an appeal mechanism allowing you to apply to the Information Commissioner, who enforces the Act (see below), for a decision as to whether the Office dealt with a specified request in accordance with the Act.

The Adjudicator's Office may charge a fee for processing a Freedom of Information access request. The fee will be calculated according to the Fees Regulations. Under the Act, fees may be charged in respect of the time spent in efficiently locating or copying records, based on a standard hourly rate. No charges may apply in respect of the time spent by the Office in considering requests. If a fee is required, the 20 working days will be extended by up to 3 months until the fee is paid.

Publication Scheme

This document sets out the Adjudicator's Office Scheme. It is also available at www.adjudicatorsoffice.gov.uk. Under Section 19 of the Act all public authorities are required to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme must specify:

- the classes of information which the Office publishes or intends to publish;
- the manner in which the information is or is intended to be published; and
- whether the material is or is intended to be made available to the public free of charge or on payment of a fee.

The Adjudicator's Office Publication Scheme is approved by the Information Commissioner (see below).

The purpose of the Publication Scheme is to identify classes of information, which are (or will be) published so that the information is readily available to the public, i.e. without the need for specific consideration under the Act, and to inform the public of the extent of material that is available.

The Office has a strict legal duty to maintain the confidentiality of the information it holds about its customers, unless disclosure is permitted by law or where the customer involved has consented to the disclosure. Neither the Office's commitment to publish information through this Publication Scheme nor the rights given by the Freedom of Information Act give access to confidential information that the Office holds about its customers.

By "readily available", we mean that the information is available on the Adjudicator's Office Internet website, may be obtained from the Office on receipt of a telephone call or letter.

The Publication Scheme lists the classes of information which are included, indicating where appropriate whether some information may be exempt, how the information is or will be published, and whether a charge will be made for providing it. When you receive the information requested it will show where information has been withheld and explain what exemption has been applied and why. **Part 2** of this document (see below) sets out the **classes** of information that the Adjudicator's Office publishes or intends to publish.

Responsibility for the Publication Scheme

The Head of Office has overall responsibility for the Adjudicator's Office Publication Scheme.

The person responsible for maintaining the Publication Scheme on a daily basis is:

Tommy Robinson
Adjudication Officer
The Adjudicator's Office
Euston Tower
286 Euston Road
London
NW1 3US

Tel: 020 7667 1832 or 0300 057 1111

Fax: 020 7667 1830 or 0300 057 1212

Availability of documents

If you would like a paper copy of the Publication Scheme, or a paper copy of the publications contained within the list of publications, please contact us by telephone or write to us at:

The Adjudicator's Office
Euston Tower
286 Euston Road
London
NW1 3US

Tel: 020 7667 1832 or 0300 057 1111

Charging for Publications

For each class listed in Part 2 below we have indicated whether the class includes chargeable information or not.

- **Free of charge on the Internet website** i.e. there is no charge by the Office, although the user would of course have to meet any charges by their Internet service provider, personal printing costs, etc. For those without Internet access, a single print-out as on the relevant website would be available by post at the e contact address listed above. The Office may make a charge for the cost of printing, postage, etc. Also, if your requests are for multiple print-outs, or for archived copies of documents which are no longer available on the web, the Office may make a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopying, postage, etc. The Office will let you know of any charges at the time of your request. Any charges will be payable in advance.
- **Free of charge hard copy**, e.g. a leaflet or booklet.

- **Free of charge to view at The Adjudicator's Office but charge for photocopy.** The Office will let you know the relevant charge at the time of your request and any charges will be payable in advance.

Copyright

The material available through this Publication Scheme is subject to Crown copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. The Crown copyright protected material (other than the Royal Arms and departmental or agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. Where any of the Crown copyright items in this Publication Scheme are being republished or copied to others, you must identify the source of the material and acknowledge the copyright status.

The permission to reproduce Crown protected material does not extend to any material accessed through the Publication Scheme that is in the copyright of third parties. You must obtain authorisation to reproduce such material from the copyright holders concerned.

Data Protection Act 1998

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 living individuals have a right to be told what personal data the Adjudicator's Office holds about them and, subject to certain exemptions, a right to be given that personal data. This Publication Scheme will not change the way the Office handles requests from people for access to their personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Complaints about the Publication Scheme

If you think that the Adjudicator's Office has not supplied information in accordance with the Publication Scheme then you should write, in the first instance, to us at the address given above.

The Head of Office will investigate the complaint. If you are still dissatisfied then you may refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner.

The Office aims to deal with the investigation of complaints within 20 working days.

The Information Commissioner

Responsibility for enforcing the Freedom of Information Act rests with the Information Commissioner, who is an independent public official responsible directly to Parliament. The Commissioner's role is to:

- promote good practice;
- approve and assist in the preparation of Publication Schemes;
- provide information about the public's rights under the Act; and
- enforce compliance with the Act.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545700
Fax: 01625 524510
Email: www.ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Review of the Publication Scheme

The Adjudicator's Office will review the Publication Scheme annually.

Feedback

The Adjudicator's Office welcomes feedback on the Publication Scheme. Comments will be considered and taken into account when reviewing the Scheme. Please send your comments to us at the address given above.

PART 2

Classes of Information

The Publication Scheme is structured around broad, high-level subject headings in order to help you find the information you are looking for. Within each of these broad subject headings are grouped identifiable classes of information that the Adjudicator's Office publishes or intends to publish. The classes are the Office's legal commitment. Under each class of information can be found:

- a definition of the information available within the class;
- the format or manner in which it is made available;
- details of any charges for providing the information.

The information available under each class will normally cover the current year and at least the two previous years, unless otherwise stated. Where specific documents are referred to within the classes, the "final" version will be made available unless otherwise stated.

The classes of information in this Publication Scheme have been grouped under the following subject headings.

1. **The structure and organisation of the Adjudicator's Office:** information about the structure and organisation of the Office and its role.
2. **Organisational strategy and performance:** Forward looking plans and strategies which provide information on the Office's business direction, information about running costs, standards of service and results achieved.
3. **Guidance to staff, customers and complaints procedures:** Internal and external guidance produced for the Office's customers.
4. **Organisational publications:** regular and one-off publications, for example Press Releases.

Classes of Information

1. The structure and organisation of the Adjudicator's Office

Class:	The Adjudicator's Office Annual Report
Definition:	The Office publishes an Annual Report each year. The Report describes the Adjudicator's Office aims and objectives and how it performed in key areas. It includes a diagram of the Office structure and also reports on the performance the Office achieved against the plans and targets set out at the beginning of the year. It is available on our Internet website from the year 2003.
Formats available:	Paper copy; web format
£ indicates that this class includes chargeable material:	-

2. Organisational strategy and performance

Class:	The Adjudicator's Office Key operational targets
Definition:	Forward looking plan setting out the Office's key targets and forecasts.
Formats available:	Paper copy
£ indicates that this class includes chargeable material:	-

3. Guidance to staff, customers and complaints procedures

Class:	Guidance material which has been prepared by the staff of the Adjudicator's Office and published for the information of its customers and their advisors. The guidance material will cover the matters for which the Adjudicator's Office is responsible including how to complain about the Office.
Definition:	Leaflets AO1, AO1 Welsh version, AO5 and AO6.
Formats available:	Paper and web format
£ indicates that this class includes chargeable material:	-

4. Organisational publications

Class:	Press Releases
Definition:	Press Releases issued by the Adjudicator's Office from the year 2004.
Formats available:	paper copy; web format
£ indicates that this class includes chargeable material:	-