

Freedom of Information Policy

Our policy reflects changes to legislation and/or to our structure or policies. We review it regularly. All staff are expected to apply it and seek advice when they need to.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives the public a right of access to information we hold, unless exemptions apply. Anyone may request any information, old and new, in any form. FOIA is designed to increase public access to information. The FCA is a transparent organisation, so a substantial quantity of information is already available to the public.

Compliance with FOIA is important for maintaining confidence in us. We fully endorse and adhere to the requirements of FOIA. These are:

1. Adopt and maintain a publication scheme, setting out what information we publish and how we publish it.
2. Provide access to information we hold when we receive a written request.
3. Let the requester know whether we hold the information, subject to any exemptions or fees notice.
4. Provide the information within 20 working days.
5. For exempt information, send the requester a notice that specifies the exemption and why it applies.
6. Where more time is needed to reach a decision, provide an estimated date by which we expect to reach one.
7. If a fee becomes chargeable, send the requester a fees notice, stating the amount. We won't fulfil the request unless the fee is paid within three months.
8. Provide advice and assistance throughout the request process.

Through appropriate application of the legislation, we'll meet our obligations to:

- maintain and review the publication scheme and publish information
- communicate requested information or send a refusal notice, within the prescribed time limits
- apply the exemptions appropriately
- charge for information within our statement of fees, which takes account of the Department of Constitutional Affairs guidance
- provide advice and assistance throughout the request process

To help us comply with the requirements of FOIA, we've:

- appointed our Chief Operating Officer, a senior executive with specific responsibility for freedom of information within the FCA
- created a dedicated Information Disclosure Team to assist FCA staff in understanding and applying FOIA and to liaise with external parties
- made available to all staff freedom of information guidance, outlining individual and organisational responsibilities and procedures

We also make sure that:

- all staff are informed of the processes for complying with FOIA
- everyone handling requests is appropriately trained to do so
- all staff have access to our records management policy
- all staff have been informed of the requirement to make sure records are saved and stored with this policy
- all those applying the exemptions are appropriately trained to do so