

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Definition document for Police Authorities and the Northern Ireland Policing Board

This guidance gives examples of the kinds of information that we would expect Police Authorities and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to provide in order to meet their commitments under the model publication scheme.

We would expect these bodies to make the information in this definition document available unless:

- they do not hold the information;
- the information is exempt under one of the FOIA exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) exceptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- the information is readily and publicly available from an external website; such information may have been provided either by the Police Authority/Board or on its behalf. The Police Authority/Board must provide a direct link to that information;
- the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or,
- it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

The guidance is not meant to give an exhaustive list of everything that should be covered in a publication scheme. The legal commitment is to the model publication scheme, and public authorities should look to provide as much information as possible on a routine basis.

Publishing datasets for re-use

Public authorities must publish under their publication scheme any dataset they hold that has been requested, together with any updated versions, unless they are satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so. So far as reasonably practicable, they must publish it in an electronic form that is capable of re-use.

If the dataset or any part of it is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, the public authority must make it available for re-use under the terms of a specified licence. Datasets in which the Crown owns the copyright or the database rights are not relevant copyright works.

The Datasets Code of Practice recommends that public authorities make datasets available for re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#).

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of FOIA. The terms 'relevant copyright work' and 'specified licence' are defined in section 19(8) of FOIA. The ICO has published [guidance](#) on the dataset provisions in FOIA. This explains what is meant by "not appropriate" and "capable of re-use".

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

We would normally expect information in this class to be for the current year only

- **Structure of the Authority or Board**

Names of members of the Police Authority or Board and any council or other body represented. Any sub-committee structure.

- **Staff structure of the Authority or Board**

Basic staff structure or other details indicating the Police Authority's or Board's administrative support.

- **Contact information**

Police Authority or Board contact details, preferably by reference to name.

- **Geographical area of operation**
- **General outline of responsibilities**
- **Appointment of independent custody visitors**
- **In Northern Ireland the appointment and role of**

Independent Community Observers

- **In Northern Ireland the role of the Board in relation to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships**
- **Relationships with other bodies**

Collaboration agreements, or other joint arrangements, with statutory and non-statutory partners.

What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

We would expect as a minimum that financial information for the current and previous two financial years should be available.

- **Summary of revenue budget estimates of the Authority or Board itself**
- **Annual statement of the Authority's or Board's accounts**
- **Budget set for the Police Force or Police Service**
- **Policing precept and/or information on other sources of income, including grants**
- **Annual investment strategy or other details of resource expenditure**
- **Expenditure**

Details of items of expenditure over £500, including costs, supplier and transaction information (monthly).

- **Details of contracts currently being tendered**
- **Contracts**

We would normally only expect the Police Authority or Board to publish contracts and invitations to tender that exceed £10,000. A list of contracts under £10,000 should also be published.

- **Expenses and allowances paid to or incurred by Authority or Board members and senior employed staff**

Details of the allowances and expenses that can be claimed or incurred. It should include the total of the allowances and expenses incurred by or paid to individual senior staff and authority or board members by reference to categories. These categories should be produced in line with the public authority's policies, practices and procedures and will be under headings like travel, subsistence and accommodation. For the purpose of this document, "senior staff" means staff whose basic actual salary is at least £58,200 per

annum.

- **Pay and grading structure**

This may be provided as part of the Police Authority or Board structure and should, as a minimum, include senior staff salaries. The salaries should be stated in bands of £5,000. For those earning less than £58,200 per annum, levels of pay should be identified by salary range.

The 'pay multiple' – the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the workforce.

- **Annual audit letter**
- **Financial audit reports**
- **Internal financial regulations and delegated authority**

What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

We would expect information in this class to be available at least for the current and previous two years.

- **Annual report**
- **Strategic plan or local policing objectives set for the Police Force or Police Service**
- **Reports presented to the Police Authority or Board indicating service provision, performance assessments, operational assessments**
- **Reports by external inspectors**
- **Information on the performance of the Police Authority or Board**
- **Statistical information provided to the Police Authority or Board**

How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions.

We would expect information in this class to be available at least for the current and previous two years.

- **Schedule of meetings open to the public**
- **Agendas and approved minutes of the Authority (Board) and Authority (Board) sub-committees**
- **Background papers for meetings open to the public**
- **Records of important decisions**

- **Procedures, facts and analyses of facts used for decision making**
- **Public consultations**

Details of consultation exercises, with access to the consultation papers. The results and outcomes of public policing consultation exercises and surveys.

Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

We would normally expect information in this class to be for the current year only.

- **Policies and procedures for the conduct of the Police Authority's or Board's business**

Standing Orders, delegated powers, corporate governance, code of conduct, memoranda of understanding and similar information.

- **Policies and procedures for the provision of services**

This will include any policies and procedures for handling requests for information.

- **Policies and procedures about the employment of staff**

Where the public authority employs its own staff, details of the policies in place, or where staff are employed through another body, reference to the policies of that body. If vacancies are advertised as part of recruitment policies, details of current vacancies will be readily available.

N.B. Where public authorities have written policies and procedures falling within the above three categories, there should be ready access to them. A number of policies, for example equality and diversity, health and safety and conduct, will cover both the provision of services and the employment of staff. If an authority has an Equality Scheme, this should be made available. A policy for outside business interests of senior employees and staff would be both a policy for the conduct of business and an employment policy.

Where procedures are developed in combination with other public authorities, these should also be available.

- **Customer service**

Standards for providing services to the authority's customers, including complaints procedures. This will include procedures for handling/overseeing complaints against the police force or service as well as complaints against the police authority or board. Complaints procedures will include those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme.

- **Records management and personal data policies**

This will include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, fileplans (or any other Business Classification Scheme used for the management of information) and data protection (including data sharing) policies.

- **Charging regimes and policies**

Details of any statutory charging regimes should be provided. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published. They should clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made, and how they are calculated.

If the public authority charges a fee for licensing the re-use of datasets, it should state in its guide to information how this is calculated and whether the charge is made under the Re-use Fees Regulations or under other legislation. It cannot charge a re-use fee if it makes the datasets available for re-use under the Open Government Licence.

Lists and registers

We expect this to be information contained only in currently maintained lists and registers.

- **Any information we are legally required to hold in publicly available registers**
- **Asset register**

We would not expect a public authority to publish all details from all asset registers. We would, however, expect the location of public land and building assets and key attribute information that is normally recorded on an asset register to be available along with some other information from capital asset registers.

- **Information asset register**

If a public authority has prepared an information asset register, it should publish the contents.

- **Register of members' interests**
- **Register of gifts and hospitality provided to members and senior personnel**

This should include details of gifts, given or received, and details of any hospitality afforded and by which organisation. Gifts and hospitality declined should also be included.

- **Disclosure log**

Where an information disclosure log is produced indicating the information that has been provided in response to FOI requests it should be readily available. Disclosure logs are themselves recommended as good practice.

The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

- **Information about the provision of the Authority's or Board's services**
- **Leaflets and explanatory booklets**
- **Media releases**
- **Services for which the authority is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees**