

# Freedom of Information Act 2000

## **CHAPTER 36**

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

### PART I

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

### Right to information

- 1 General right of access to information held by public authorities
- 2 Effect of the exemptions in Part II
- 3 Public authorities
- 4 Amendment of Schedule 1
- 5 Further power to designate public authorities
- 6 Publicly-owned companies
- 7 Public authorities to which Act has limited application
- 8 Request for information
- 9 Fees
- 10 Time for compliance with request
- 11 Means by which communication to be made
- 12 Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit
- 13 Fees for disclosure where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit
- Vexatious or repeated requests
- 15 Special provisions relating to public records transferred to Public Record Office, etc
- 16 Duty to provide advice and assistance

### Refusal of request

17 Refusal of request

### The Information Commissioner and the Information Tribunal

## 18 The Information Commissioner and the Information Tribunal

### Publication schemes

- 19 Publication schemes
- 20 Model publication schemes

### PART II

### **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 21 Information accessible to applicant by other means
- 22 Information intended for future publication
- 23 Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
- 24 National security
- 25 Certificates under ss. 23 and 24: supplementary provisions
- 26 Defence
- 27 International relations
- 28 Relations within the United Kingdom
- 29 The economy
- 30 Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities
- 31 Law enforcement
- 32 Court records, etc
- 33 Audit functions
- 34 Parliamentary privilege
- 35 Formulation of government policy, etc
- 36 Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs
- 37 Communications with Her Majesty, etc. and honours
- 38 Health and safety
- 39 Environmental information
- 40 Personal information
- 41 Information provided in confidence
- 42 Legal professional privilege
- 43 Commercial interests
- 44 Prohibitions on disclosure

### PART III

# GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF SECRETARY OF STATE, LORD CHANCELLOR AND INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

- 45 Issue of code of practice by Secretary of State
- 46 Issue of code of practice by Lord Chancellor
- 47 General functions of Commissioner
- 48 Recommendations as to good practice
- 49 Reports to be laid before Parliament

## PART IV

### **ENFORCEMENT**

- 50 Application for decision by Commissioner
- 51 Information notices
- 52 Enforcement notices

- 53 Exception from duty to comply with decision notice or enforcement notice
- 54 Failure to comply with notice
- 55 Powers of entry and inspection
- 56 No action against public authority

#### PART V

### APPEALS

- 57 Appeal against notices served under Part IV
- 58 Determination of appeals
- 59 Appeals from decision of Tribunal
- 60 Appeals against national security certificate
- 61 Appeal proceedings

### PART VI

# HISTORICAL RECORDS AND RECORDS IN PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OR PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

- 62 Interpretation of Part VI
- 63 Removal of exemptions: historical records generally
- 64 Removal of exemptions: historical records in public record offices
- 65 Decisions as to refusal of discretionary disclosure of historical records
- 66 Decisions relating to certain transferred public records
- 67 Amendments of public records legislation

### **PART VII**

## AMENDMENTS OF DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

Amendments relating to personal information held by public authorities

- 68 Extension of meaning of "data"
- 69 Right of access to unstructured personal data held by public authorities
- 70 Exemptions applicable to certain manual data held by public authorities
- 71 Particulars registrable under Part III of Data Protection Act 1998
- 72 Availability under Act disregarded for purpose of exemption

### Other amendments

73 Further amendments of Data Protection Act 1998

### **PART VIII**

## MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

- 74 Power to make provision relating to environmental information
- 75 Power to amend or repeal enactments prohibiting disclosure of information
- 76 Disclosure of information between Commissioner and ombudsmen
- 77 Offence of altering etc. records with intent to prevent disclosure
- 78 Saving for existing powers
- 79 Defamation
- 80 Scotland
- 81 Application to government departments, etc
- 82 Orders and regulations

- 83 Meaning of "Welsh public authority"
- 84 Interpretation
- 85 Expenses
- 86 Repeals
- 87 Commencement
- 88 Short title and extent

### **SCHEDULES**

## SCHEDULE 1 — Public authorities

Part I — GENERAL

- 1 Any government department.
- 2 The House of Commons.
- 3 The House of Lords.
- 4 The Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 5 The National Assembly for Wales.
- 6 The armed forces of the Crown, except—

Part II — LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### England and Wales

- 7 A local authority within the meaning of the Local Government...
- 8 The Greater London Authority.
- 9 The Common Council of the City of London, in respect...
- 10 The Sub-Treasurer of the Inner Temple or the Under-Treasurer of...
- 11 The Council of the Isles of Scilly.
- 12 A parish meeting constituted under section 13 of the Local...
- 13 Any charter trustees constituted under section 246 of the Local...
- 14 A fire authority constituted by a combination scheme under section...
- 15 A waste disposal authority established by virtue of an order...
- 16 A port health authority constituted by an order under section...
- 17 A licensing planning committee constituted under section 119 of the...
- 18 An internal drainage board which is continued in being by...
- 19 A joint authority established under Part IV of the Local...
- 20 The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.
- 21 A joint fire authority established by virtue of an order...
- 22 A body corporate established pursuant to an order under section...
- 23 A body corporate established pursuant to an order under section...
- 24 The Broads Authority established by section 1 of the Norfolk...
- 25 A joint committee constituted in accordance with section 102(1)(b) of...
- 26 A joint board which is continued in being by virtue...
- 27 A joint authority established under section 21 of the Local...
- 28 A Passenger Transport Executive for a passenger transport area within...
- 29 Transport for London.
- 30 The London Transport Users Committee.
- 31 A joint board the constituent members of which consist of...
- 32 A National Park authority established by an order under section...
- 33 A joint planning board constituted for an area in Wales...
- 34 A magistrates' court committee established under section 27 of the...
- 35 The London Development Agency.

#### Northern Ireland

36 A district council within the meaning of the Local Government... Part III — THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

## England and Wales

- 37 A Health Authority established under section 8 of the National...
- 38 A special health authority established under section 11 of the...
- 39 A primary care trust established under section 16A of the...
- 40 A National Health Service trust established under section 5 of...
- 41 A Community Health Council established under section 20 of the...
- 42 The Dental Practice Board constituted under regulations made under section...
- 43 The Public Health Laboratory Service Board constituted under Schedule 3...
- 44 Any person providing general medical services, general dental services, general...
- 45 Any person providing personal medical services or personal dental services...

### Northern Ireland

- 46 A Health and Social Services Board established under Article 16...
- 47 A Health and Social Services Council established under Article 4...
- 48 A Health and Social Services Trust established under Article 10...
- 49 A special agency established under Article 3 of the Health...
- 50 The Northern Ireland Central Services Agency for the Health and...
- 51 Any person providing general medical services, general dental services, general...

Part IV — MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### England and Wales

- 52 The governing body of a maintained school, within the meaning...
- 53 (1) The governing body of—(a) an institution within the...

## Northern Ireland

- 54 (1) The managers of— (a) a controlled school, voluntary school...
- 55 (1) The governing body of— (a) a university receiving financial...
- Any person providing further education to whom grants, loans or...

Part V — POLICE

## England and Wales

- 57 A police authority established under section 3 of the Police...
- 58 The Metropolitan Police Authority established under section 5B of the...
- 59 A chief officer of police of a police force in...

### Northern Ireland

- 60 The Police Authority for Northern Ireland.
- 61 The Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

#### Miscellaneous

- 62 The British Transport Police.
- 63 The Ministry of Defence Police established by section 1 of...
- 64 Any person who— (a) by virtue of any enactment has...

Part VI — OTHER PUBLIC BODIES AND OFFICES: GENERAL

Part VII — OTHER PUBLIC BODIES AND OFFICES: NORTHERN IRELAND

SCHEDULE 2 — The Commissioner and the Tribunal

Part I — Provision consequential on s. 18(1) and (2)

#### General

- 1 (1) Any reference in any enactment, instrument or document to...
- 2 (1) Any reference in this Act or in any instrument...

Public Records Act 1958 (c. 51)

3 (1) In Part II of the Table in paragraph 3...

Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (c. 13)

- 4 In Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (departments...
- 5 In Schedule 4 to that Act (tribunals exercising administrative functions),...

Superannuation Act 1972 (c. 11)

6 In Schedule 1 to the Superannuation Act 1972 (employment with...

Consumer Credit Act 1974 (c. 39)

7 In section 159 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 (correction...

House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 (c. 24)

8 (1) In Part II of Schedule 1 to the House...

Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975 (c. 25)

9 (1) In Part II of Schedule 1 to the Northern...

Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1992 (c. 53)

10 In paragraph 14 of Part I of Schedule 1 to...

Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993 (c. 8)

- 11 In Schedule 5 to the Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act...
- 12 In Schedule 7 to that Act (retirement dates: transitional provisions),...

### Data Protection Act 1998 (c. 29)

- 13 (1) Section 6 of the Data Protection Act 1998 (the...
- 14 In section 70(1) of that Act (supplementary definitions)—
- 15 (1) Schedule 5 to that Act (the Data Protection Commissioner...

# Part II — AMENDMENTS RELATING TO EXTENSION OF FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSIONER AND TRIBUNAL

Interests represented by lay members of Tribunal

16 In section 6(6) of the Data Protection Act 1998 (lay...

Expenses incurred under this Act excluded in calculating fees

17 In section 26(2) of that Act (fees regulations), in paragraph...

Information provided to Commissioner or Tribunal

- 18 In section 58 of that Act (disclosure of information to...
- 19 (1) Section 59 of that Act (confidentiality of information) is...

## Deputy commissioners

20 (1) Paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 to that Act (officers...

Exercise of Commissioner's functions by others

21 (1) Paragraph 5 of Schedule 5 to that Act (exercise...

### Money

22 In paragraph 9(1) of Schedule 5 to that Act (money)...

SCHEDULE 3 — Powers of entry and inspection

## Issue of warrants

- 1 (1) If a circuit judge is satisfied by information on...
- 2 (1) A judge shall not issue a warrant under this...
- 3 A judge who issues a warrant under this Schedule shall...

## Execution of warrants

- 4 A person executing a warrant issued under this Schedule may...
- 5 A warrant issued under this Schedule shall be executed at...
- 6 (1) If the premises in respect of which a warrant...
- 7 (1) A person seizing anything in pursuance of a warrant...

# Matters exempt from inspection and seizure

- 8 The powers of inspection and seizure conferred by a warrant...
- 9 (1) Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, the powers...
- 10 If the person in occupation of any premises in respect...

## Return of warrants

11 A warrant issued under this Schedule shall be returned to...

### Offences

12 Any person who— (a) intentionally obstructs a person in the...

### Vessels, vehicles etc.

13 In this Schedule "premises" includes any vessel, vehicle, aircraft or...

### Scotland and Northern Ireland

- 14 In the application of this Schedule to Scotland—
- 15 In the application of this Schedule to Northern Ireland—

# SCHEDULE 4 — Appeal proceedings: amendments of Schedule 6 to Data Protection Act 1998

## Constitution of Tribunal in national security cases

- 1 In paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 6 to the Data Protection...
- 2 For paragraph 3 of that Schedule there is substituted— The Tribunal shall be duly constituted— (a) for an appeal...

## Constitution of Tribunal in other cases

3 (1) Paragraph 4 of that Schedule (constitution of Tribunal in...

### Rules of procedure

4 (1) Paragraph 7 of that Schedule (rules of procedure) is...

# SCHEDULE 5 — Amendments of public records legislation Part I — AMENDMENTS OF PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958

# Functions of Advisory Council on Public Records

1 In section 1 of the Public Records Act 1958 (general...

## Access to public records

- 2 (1) Section 5 of that Act (access to public records)...
- 3 Schedule 2 of that Act (enactments prohibiting disclosure of information...

## Power to extend meaning of "public records"

- 4 In Schedule 1 to that Act (definition of public records)...
  - Part II AMENDMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND)
    1923
- 5 After section 5 of the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland)...

# SCHEDULE 6 — Further amendments of Data Protection Act 1998

# Request by data controller for further information

1 In section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 (right...

### Parliament

- 2 After section 35 of that Act there is inserted—Parliamentary...
- 3 After section 63 of that Act there is inserted— Application...
- 4 In Schedule 2 to that Act (conditions relevant for the...
- 5 In Schedule 3 to that Act (conditions relevant for the...

#### Honours

6 In Schedule 7 to that Act (miscellaneous exemptions) in paragraph...

## Legal professional privilege

7 In paragraph 10 of that Schedule (legal professional privilege), for...

### Extension of transitional exemption

8 In Schedule 14 to that Act (transitional provisions), in paragraph...

## SCHEDULE 7 — Disclosure of information by ombudsmen

## The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration

- 1 At the end of section 11 of the Parliamentary Commissioner...
- 2 After section 11A of that Act there is inserted—Disclosure...

### The Commissions for Local Administration in England and Wales

- In section 32 of the Local Government Act 1974 (law...
- 4 After section 33 of that Act there is inserted—Disclosure...

### The Health Service Commissioners

- 5 At the end of section 15 of the Health Service...
- 6 After section 18 of that Act there is inserted—Disclosure...

## The Welsh Administration Ombudsman

- 7 In Schedule 9 to the Government of Wales Act 1998...
- 8 After paragraph 27 of that Schedule there is inserted—Disclosure...

### The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints

- 9 At the end of Article 21 of the Commissioner for...
- 10 After that Article there is inserted—Disclosure of information to...

## The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

- 11 At the end of Article 19 of the Ombudsman (Northern...
- 12 After that Article there is inserted—Disclosure of information to...

### The Commissioner for Local Administration in Scotland

13 In section 30 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975...

## SCHEDULE 8 — Repeals

- Part I REPEAL COMING INTO FORCE ON PASSING OF ACT
- Part II REPEALS COMING INTO FORCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 87(2)
- Part III REPEALS COMING INTO FORCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 87(3)