



Northern Ireland Office

Guide to Information

INTRODUCTION

This *'Guide to Information'* outlines how the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Publication Scheme works. It provides a brief overview of how the public can obtain information from the NIO as provided for by the Freedom of Information Act and explains what a publication scheme is. It also outlines the information NIO and its Executive Agencies make routinely available, how this information can be accessed and whether or not a charge will be made for it.

OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM THE NIO AND ITS AGENCIES

Information can be obtained from NIO and its Agencies either through its Publication Scheme (for routinely published information) and in response to requests made under the general right to access as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2005.

1. BY REQUEST

The Freedom of Information Act 2000, which came into force in 2005, is part of the Government's commitment to greater openness. It provides individuals or organisations with the right to request information held by a public authority and sets out exemptions from that right. In other words, it gives any individual a statutory right to request information directly from a public authority and have it provided except where permitted exemptions apply.

Further information regarding the Freedom of Information Act can be obtained from the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.gov.uk) the independent public body set up to promote access to official information and protect personal information.

2. PUBLICATION SCHEMES

From November 2002 it has been a legal requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for all public authorities to have a publication scheme. Essentially publication schemes are guides to the information that a public authority routinely publishes or intends to publish. For ease of use, the information available under this publication scheme has been grouped under seven broad headings for the NIO and for each of the Executive Agencies. This *'Guide to Information'* outlines the format in which the information is available, for example printed or online, whether there is a cost for obtaining the printed information and from where the information can be obtained.

The NIO adheres to an approved model publication scheme. This publication scheme is available on the NIO website (www.nio.gov.uk/index/foi/publication_scheme-foi.htm) and in print upon request to the NIO's Freedom of Information Team on 028 90765841 or by e-mail to foi@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk)

If you are looking for information about the NIO and any of its executive agencies, you might find it helpful to use this *'Guide to Information'* as your starting point. You might also find it useful to refer to "Inforoute" which is a

register of Government Information Assets. This is available online at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/iar/index.htm>

3. HISTORICAL RECORDS

Official records deemed of value for permanent preservation are transferred at 30 years old to the National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) or the Public Record Office Northern Ireland (www.proni.gov.uk)

4. COPYRIGHT

The Northern Ireland Office is a Crown body and the information we produce is subject to Crown copyright, which is administered by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The material listed in this Publication Scheme is Crown copyright unless stated otherwise. The copyright in some of the material which may be found in this Publication Scheme has been waived, meaning you can reproduce this material freely. Categories of material for which copyright has been waived include: government press notices, legislation and explanatory notes on the legislation, ministerial speeches, consultation documents, documents featured on official websites (except where expressly indicated otherwise), headline statistics and unpublished public records. More details of these and other categories can be found at: www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/crown-copyright/copyright-guidance/index.htm

For other types of material however, the supply of documents under Freedom of Information does not give the person or organisation who receives them an automatic right to re-use the documents in a way that would infringe copyright, for example, by making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public.

Brief extracts of any of the material included in this Publication Scheme may be reproduced under the fair dealing provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (sections 29 and 30) for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes, private study, criticism, review and news reporting.

Details of the arrangements for reusing Crown copyright material can be found on the [OPSI website](#) or by contacting Her Majesty's Stationery Office at:

Office of Public Sector Information

Information Policy Team
Kew
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 4DU

e-mail: licensing@opsi.gov.uk

Authorisation to re-use copyright material not owned by the Crown should be sought from the copyright holders concerned. If in doubt, users should contact Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the first instance.

5. CHARGES

The information in this Scheme is available on the Northern Ireland Office's website (www.nio.gov.uk). For those without Internet access, or who require a hard copy, a single printout or bound copy of any of the documents referred to in

the Scheme can be obtained, unless otherwise stated, free of charge by post or by contacting the NIO's Freedom of Information Team on 028 90765841 or by e-mail to foi@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

When requesting information, please include the following details:

- Your name and address;
- The information or documents you would like to access; and
- The way you would like the information sent to you i.e. hard copy or email

INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLISHED BY OTHER BODIES

The Northern Ireland Office is not responsible for the publication of items listed as being published by the Stationary Office, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Civil Service Commissioner, Parades Commission, Public Inspectors and assessor or Parliament. These have been included as a further aid to the public.

For information about the Northern Ireland Executive or Northern Ireland's Government Departments please contact the relevant department directly through the link below:

- The Northern Ireland Executive www.northernireland.gov.uk
- Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development: www.dardni.gov.uk
- Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure www.dcalni.gov.uk
- Department of Education www.deni.gov.uk
- Department for Employment and Learning www.delni.gov.uk
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment www.detini.gov.uk
- Department of the Environment www.doeni.gov.uk
- Department of Finance and Personnel www.dfpni.gov.uk
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety www.dhsspsni.gov.uk
- Department for Regional Development www.drdni.gov.uk
- Department for Social Development www.dsdni.gov.uk

THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE – AN INTRODUCTION

The role of the Northern Ireland Office is to support the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in taking forward Government policy in Northern Ireland. In addition to supporting and fostering the political and democratic process in Northern Ireland, the Department has an overall policy responsibility for upholding law, order and security including the provision of criminal justice services such as policing, prisons and probation.

There is a range of other matters which are dealt with through a network of associated bodies. These deliver the business of the Government in areas where a degree of independence is a requirement in providing service to the public. These partner bodies consist of:

- i. Executive Agencies and analogues (the Law Offices); and
- ii. Public Bodies, including Non-Departmental Public Bodies (Executive, Advisory), Independent Monitoring Boards, Independent Statutory Bodies and International Bodies.

This Publication Scheme covers the core department of the Northern Ireland Office and its four executive agencies. A brief description of each Agency's role is provided below:

- Compensation Agency for Northern Ireland
The Compensation Agency's aim is to support victims of violent crime and people who have suffered loss from action taken under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007, by ensuring that they are appropriately compensated in accordance with the relevant statutory schemes.
- Forensic Science Northern Ireland
Forensic Science Northern Ireland exists to provide effective scientific advice and support to enhance the delivery of justice through a range of services including scientific support for the police in the investigation of crime, scientific support for the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, scientific advice for the legal profession and objective expert testimony to the courts as well as analytical support for the State Pathologist's Department.
- Northern Ireland Prison Service
The aim of the Prison Service is to serve the community by keeping in secure, safe and humane custody those committed by the courts and to work with prisoners and other organisations to reduce the risk of re-offending. Through these services the Prison Service aims to protect the public and to contribute to peace and stability in Northern Ireland.
- Youth Justice Agency
The Youth Justice Agency carries out the Secretary of State's function for the provision of youth justice services under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998. The Agency also plays a key role within the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland (CJSNI), which aims to secure an improved service to the public through better co-operation, co-ordination and accountability in the administration of the Northern Ireland criminal justice system. The Agency aims to reduce youth crime and to build confidence in the youth justice system.

Contact details and links are provided below the NIO Core Department and for the four Executive Agencies:

Northern Ireland Office

The Northern Ireland Office has offices in Belfast and London:

Northern Ireland Office

11 Millbank
London
SW1P 4PN
England

Northern Ireland Office

Block B
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
Northern Ireland
BT4 3SG
Telephone: (028) 9052 0700
Textphone: (028) 9052 7668
Website: www.nio.gov.uk

Compensation Agency for Northern Ireland

Royston House
34 Upper Queen Street
BELFAST BT1 6FD
Telephone: 028 9024 9944
Text phone: 028 9052 7668
Fax: 028 9024 6956
E-mail: comp-agency@nics.gov.uk
Website: www.compensationni.gov.uk

Forensic Science Northern Ireland

Seapark
151 Belfast Road
CARRICKFERGUS BT38 8PL
Telephone: 028 9036 1888
Fax: 028 9036 1900
E-mail: forensic.science@fsni.gov.uk
Website: www.fsni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST BT4 3SU
Telephone: 028 9052 5065
Fax: 028 9052 5284
E-mail: info@niprisonservice.gov.uk
Website: www.niprisonservice.gov.uk

Youth Justice Agency

41-43 Waring Street,
BELFAST BT1 2DY

Telephone: 028 9031 6400

Fax: 028 9031 6402/3

E-mail: info@yjani.gov.uk

Website: www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk

A full list of links of relevant bodies can be found on the NIO website
(<http://www.nio.gov.uk/index/useful-links.htm>)

THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE – AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Information which is available under this Publication Scheme for the Northern Ireland Office is listed below under seven broad headings. These headings are designed to help users of the scheme to find the information they are seeking.

Please note that we do not publish all information that falls within these group headings. This may be because we do not hold the information or that it is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

The table below is intended to act as a directory of the information available for the NIO providing details on the types of information available and how it can be accessed. In most instances, information which is available online is free of charge unless indicated otherwise.

Class of Information	Types of Information Published
1. Who we are and what we do	General information about the role of the NIO, its organisational structure, its locations and contact details
2. What we spend and how we spend it	Financial information about NIO's income and expenditure, procurement procedures, costs of inquiries, political talks, contracts available for tender etc
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing	This includes NIO's strategic plan, its annual report, performance reviews, inspection reports etc
4. How we make decisions	This includes information about major policy proposals and decisions, public consultations etc
5. Our policies and procedures	Current written protocols, policies and procedures for conducting NIO's business
6. Lists and registers	Examples include asset registers, disclosure logs, register of gifts and hospitality
7. The services we offer	More detailed information about NIO's regulatory responsibilities and any services it provides, media releases etc

THE COMPENSATION AGENCY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND – AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Information which is available under this Publication Scheme for the Compensation Agency is listed below under seven broad headings. These headings are designed to help users of the scheme to find the information they are seeking.

Please note that we do not publish all information that falls within these group headings. This may be because we do not hold the information or that it is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

The table below is intended to act as a directory of the information available for the Compensation Agency providing details on the types of information available and how it can be accessed. In most instances, information which is available online is free of charge unless indicated otherwise.

All information published can be accessed directly from the Compensation Agency's website (www.compensationni.gov.uk)

Class of Information	Types of Information Published
1. Who we are and what we do	General information about the role of the Compensation Agency, its organisational structure, its locations and contact details
2. What we spend and how we spend it	Financial information about the Agency's income and expenditure, internal financial regulations, contracts available for tender etc
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing	This includes the Agency's annual business plan, its annual report, service standards etc
7. The services we offer	More detailed information about the Agency's regulatory responsibilities and any services it provides including leaflets, advice and guidance

FORENSIC SCIENCE NORTHERN IRELAND – AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Information which is available under this Publication Scheme Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) is listed below under seven broad headings. These headings are designed to help users of the scheme to find the information they are seeking.

Please note that we do not publish all information that falls within these group headings. This may be because we do not hold the information or that it is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

The table below is intended to act as a directory of the information available for FSNI providing details on the types of information available and how it can be accessed. In most instances, information which is available online is free of charge unless indicated otherwise.

All information published can be accessed directly from the FSNI website (www.fsni.gov.uk). Please note that this website is currently under construction.

Class of Information	Types of Information Published
1. Who we are and what we do	General information about the role of the FSNI, its organisational structure, its locations and contact details
2. What we spend and how we spend it	Financial information about FSNI's income and expenditure, financial audit reports, senior staff and board members' allowances/expenses etc
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing	This includes the Agency's strategic plan, its annual business plan and report, performance reviews, inspection reports, public service agreements etc

THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE – AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Information which is available under this Publication Scheme for the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) is listed below under seven broad headings. These headings are designed to help users of the scheme to find the information they are seeking.

Please note that we do not publish all information that falls within these group headings. This may be because we do not hold the information or that it is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

The table below is intended to act as a directory of the information available for NIPS providing details on the types of information available and how it can be accessed. In most instances, information which is available online is free of charge unless indicated otherwise.

All information published can be accessed directly from the NIPS website (www.niprisonservice.gov.uk)

Class of Information	Types of Information Published
1. Who we are and what we do	General information about the role and responsibilities of the NIPS, its organisational structure, its locations and contact details
2. What we spend and how we spend it	Financial information about NIPS' income and expenditure, spending reviews, procurement procedures, staff and board members' allowances/expenses etc
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing	This includes the Agency's corporate plan, its annual report, inspection reports, statistics, service standards, independent reports and reviews etc
4. How we make decisions	This includes information about major policy proposals and decisions, public consultations, Board Minutes, operational standards etc
5. Our policies and procedures	Current written policies and procedures for delivering the Agency's business and services including recruitment and records and information management policies
7. The services we offer	More detailed information about NIPS' regulatory responsibilities and the services it provides such as booking prison visits online, as well as news letters, media releases etc

THE YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY – AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Information which is available under this Publication Scheme for the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) is listed below under seven broad headings. These headings are designed to help users of the scheme to find the information they are seeking.

Please note that we do not publish all information that falls within these group headings. This may be because we do not hold the information or that it is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

The table below is intended to act as a directory of the information available for YJA providing details on the types of information available and how it can be accessed. In most instances, information which is available online is free of charge unless indicated otherwise.

All information published can be accessed directly from the YJA website (www.youthjusticeagency.ni.gov.uk)

Class of Information	Types of Information Published
1. Who we are and what we do	Information about the role and responsibilities of the YJA, its organisational structure, its locations and contact details
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing	This includes the Agency's strategic plans, its annual business plan and report, inspection reports, statistics etc
4. How we make decisions	This includes reports and papers provided for consideration at senior level meetings etc
5. Our policies and procedures	Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering the Agency's responsibilities and services including customer charter and complaints charter
7. The services we offer	Information about YJA's services it provides including leaflets, booklets and advice/guidance the Agency publishes