

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 makes routinely available, how this information can be accessed and whether or not a charge will be made for it.

OBTAINING INFORMATION FROM THE NIO

Information can be obtained from NIO 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. 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 020 7210 0840 or by e-mail to foi@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk

If you are looking for information about the NIO, 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/copyrightguidance/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 020 7210 0840 or by email 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 Justice www.dojni.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.

On 12 April 2010 the Northern Ireland Office transferred responsibility for policing and criminal justice to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive. The Department's future role will focus on overseeing the Northern Ireland devolution settlement and representing Northern Ireland interests at UK Government level and UK Government interests in Northern Ireland. The

Department will, however, retain responsibility for national security in respect of Northern Ireland as well as Human Rights, elections, legacy issues (including current inquiries) and matters relating to the Royal Household.

The Department will continue to work with the Northern Ireland political parties and with the Irish Government to support successful devolution in Northern Ireland and to work with key stakeholders to maintain a secure and safe environment and to ensure that policy development within the United Kingdom takes full account of circumstances in Northern Ireland.

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

Northern Ireland Office

The Northern Ireland Office has offices in Belfast and London:

Northern Ireland Office

11 Millbank
London
SW1P 4PN
England
020 7210 6562

Northern Ireland Office

Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
Northern Ireland
BT4 3SH
028 90520700

Website: www.nio.gov.uk

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	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