

What happens if the information I want is not available?

The FOI Act does not require us to gather information that is not already there. However, we will do our very best to help you with your request and contact you to explain what information we do hold that might help answer your query.

What should I do if I am refused information?

We will contact you to explain if the information you have requested is being withheld and the reasons why. If you are not satisfied with our decision, you may appeal to the Northern Ireland Information Commissioner. However, first you are required to contact us again asking us to resolve the problem. If you are still not satisfied, you will then be able to appeal to the Commissioner.

Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at the address below. You can also get more information about FOI from the Commissioner's Office.

Address: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor
14 Cromac Place
BELFAST
BT7 2JB

Phone: (028) 9051 1200

Email: ni@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk



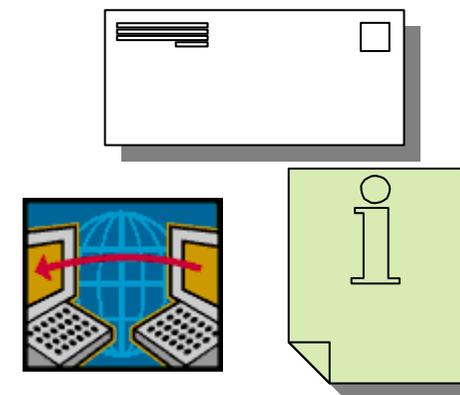
**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

A GUIDE FOR THE PUBLIC FOR ACCESSING INFORMATION ABOUT THE NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

DECEMBER 2018

**'bringing about greater
openness, transparency and
accountability'**



What does Freedom of Information mean for me?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) gives everyone the right to obtain information from all public authorities. This includes the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS).

You can ask for information about how NIFRS works, how we carry out our duties, why we make the decisions we do, and how we spend public money. Freedom of Information is an important step in bringing about greater openness, transparency and accountability and increasing public confidence in the service we provide.

You can also obtain information under:

- The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA); and
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

How do I go about getting information about NIFRS under the FOI Act?

Information can be obtained by:

- Accessing our Publication Scheme
- Making a written request (inc emails).

You can obtain information and contact details from our website www.nifrs.org.uk. Under our FOI section, you can already download a lot of information free of charge. However, if what you want isn't there, can't be downloaded, or you don't have access to the Internet, then you can write to us at the address overleaf.

All requests for information under the FOI Act must be made in writing, or by e-mail.

Address: The Freedom of Information
Co-Ordinator
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue
Service
1 Seymour Street
Lisburn BT27 4SX

E-mail: FOIOfficer@nifrs.org
Phone: (028) 9266 4221
Fax: (028) 9267 7402

The FOI Office staff will be able to provide you with assistance and advice if you have made, or are thinking of making a request for information. They will help you understand your rights under the FOI Act and identify the information you require.

How long does it take to get information?

Once a written request for information is received, we will respond promptly and in any event not later than 20 working days of receipt of your request. Working days will be defined as Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays and other Public Holidays. However, there are circumstances when this time can be extended. Sometimes we may need to contact you to be sure about what information you require. You can help us with this by being as clear as possible in your request for information as well as providing your name, address and a contact telephone number. Please also let us know what form you would like to receive the information in, and we will do our very best to respond to your request.

Is there a cost for this service?

Whilst most information can be accessed free of charge, certain publications and other classes of information will only be available on receipt of payment, for example, if what you are requesting is not contained within the Publication Scheme NIFRS may charge a fee to cover the cost of gathering and/or copying the information.

If this is the case we will notify you of the charge and seek your approval first. We will not proceed until we have received your fee. If the fee is not paid within 3 months, we will assume that you no longer want the information.

Can I have any information at all?

FOI is all about making as much information available to the public as possible in an open and transparent manner. There will also be exemptions where information cannot be given to the public. For example, information about national security, law enforcement or personal information about others - although you can obtain your own personal information through the Data Protection Act.