

What is freedom of information?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all recorded information held by, or on behalf of, any public authority. The Act allows anyone (subject to certain exemptions) to get details of recorded information held by the public authority. You can find out more about your rights under the Act by visiting the website of the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk.

How does the Act work?

The Act enables anyone to request information. The public authority must usually respond to a request within 20 working days, stating whether they hold the information and, unless an exemption applies to the information, must provide that information. Each public authority must also make available a publication scheme detailing information that it publishes, under seven data classes:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- Our priorities and how we achieve them
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer.

Under each of the seven classes are several information categories. For each category the public authority lists titles and descriptions of the information that forms part of its publication scheme, and says how you can get the information.

If you want information from The Insolvency Service under the Act, or a paper copy of our publication scheme, you should write to:

The Data Protection and Freedom of Information Liaison Officer
Technical Section
PO Box 15394
Birmingham
B16 6HT
Or by email to:
FOI@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

You can access the full publication scheme on our website at www.insolvency.gov.uk.

Does the Act apply to the official receiver?

The Act does not apply to the official receiver when they act in their statutory capacity as:

- provisional liquidator;
- liquidator;
- interim receiver;
- receiver and manager;
- trustee; or
- nominee/supervisor of a Fast Track Voluntary Arrangement.

Instead, while acting in this statutory capacity, the official receiver is accountable to the court for their actions.

The Act does not give you the right to request information held in an official receiver's files solely because they act as statutory office holder. The official receiver's files are confidential and not open to inspection by the public.

What about other parts of The Insolvency Service?

The Act covers requests for information to all other parts of The Service, subject to any exemptions that may apply.

What other information can I request?

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provide the right of access to environmental information held by The Insolvency Service. You can make a request under the regulations verbally or in writing, and can find more details about their scope on the Information Commissioner's website.

To request environmental information under the regulations, write to:

Change and Workplace Services
Fourth Floor, Zone D
21 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3QW

or telephone: 020 7291 6756.

Can I request personal information about me or a third party under the Act?

No, personal information is exempt from the Act and is dealt with under data protection legislation. Our leaflet 'Data Protection and The Insolvency Service' covers requests for personal information.

Where can I find more about how The Insolvency Service deals with freedom of information requests?

You can find more information about your rights under the Act, and the various exemptions to those rights, in The Insolvency Service's Publication Scheme. It's published on our website at www.insolvency.gov.uk.

If you want more information or wish to make a complaint about how we have handled a request, you should write to:

The Data Protection and Freedom of Information Liaison Officer
Technical Section
PO Box 15394
Birmingham
B16 6HT
Or by email to:
FOI@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

Where can I find out more?

For general enquiries on insolvency, you can contact The Insolvency Enquiry Line on 0845 602 9848, or email:
Insolvency.Enquiryline@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

You can obtain further copies of this booklet from The Insolvency Service website:
www.insolvency.gov.uk.

All our publications are also available on this website. You can download or order them from the website.

You can also order free copies of our publications from the BIS Publications

Orderline (contact details below). You'll need to give the reference number of the publication, which you can get from its back page or our website.

You can order publications:

- by telephone: 0845 015 0010
- by email: publications@bis.gsi.gov.uk
- by fax: 0845 015 0020.

Minicom users should telephone:
0845 015 00308.

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December 2009

URN09-1597



Freedom of Information and The Insolvency Service

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