



Commission for
Rural Communities
Tackling rural disadvantage

**CRC
Freedom Of
Information Act
Publication
Scheme**

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1 Introduction

Our publication Scheme The Commission for Rural Communities (the CRC) Publication Scheme (the scheme) brings together in one place and in a clear and structured manner the types of information that the CRC makes proactively available to the public. The scheme describes the types of information that we publish or intend to publish, the formats in which it is available and also assists in finding information within the structure that we have adopted to make the information accessible.

Who is responsible for maintaining the scheme? The CRC's Chief Information Officer has overall responsibility for the scheme and is responsible for maintaining the scheme on a day-to-day basis.

Any enquiries about this scheme should be addressed to:

Chief Information Officer

John Dower House,

Crescent Place,

Cheltenham,

GL50 3RA.

Email: CIO@ruralcommunities.gov.uk

How we make information available The CRC routinely makes a wide range and extensive amount of information available to the public in relation to its functions, activities and schemes. Much of this information can be found on our website at www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk.

Information not routinely available is accessible in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 [FOIA] by submitting a request for information to the Chief Information Officer. This is covered in detail in section 4 of this document.

What is the Freedom of information Act? The FOIA was fully implemented on 1 January 2005. It asserts the right of individuals to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the need to protect legitimate confidential information.

The FOIA is designed to allow public access to information held by public bodies that is not routinely available from other sources. Access to information under the FOIA is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits, which are outlined in section 4 of this Guide, "How to gain access to information".

2 Purpose of this guide

This guide provides information on the structure and activities of the CRC to assist you in accessing information both outside and under the FOIA. One of the aims of the FOIA is that public authorities should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

Central to this is the preparation of publication schemes, setting out:

- The classes of information we publish or intend to publish;
- The manner in which they will be published; and
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

The classes of information are specified in section 9 of this scheme and details of fees and formats for information are set out in section 7.

If having searched the scheme you cannot find what you are looking for, section 4 explains how and where to make a request for items not covered by our publication scheme.

The scheme refers to all kinds of information, which we publish both for internal use and externally. Publication does not refer solely to printed material. It also includes information in other formats such as electronic documents. CRC publications can include DVDs, films and audio recordings.

The classes in the scheme are based on information type, which should be meaningful to users, and no knowledge of our organisational structure is required to navigate around the scheme.

3 The role of the CRC

The Commission was set up as a division of the Countryside Agency in April 2005 and became an independent body on 1 October 2006, following the enactment of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act) available from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery/bill/>.

The Commission's role is to provide well-informed, independent advice to government and ensure that policies reflect the real needs of people living and working in rural England, with a particular focus on tackling disadvantage.

We have three key functions:

Rural advocate:

- The voice for rural people, businesses and communities

Expert adviser:

- Giving evidence-based, objective advice to government and others

Independent watchdog:

- Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of policies nationally, regionally and locally.

4 How to gain access to information

Information already available to the general public via our website This information may be accessed without using the FOIA. A great deal of information is already published on our website, www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk, this includes:

- Publications outlining the results from reports and research
- Procedure and guidance
- Inquiry information
- Organisation and Personnel

Copyright Different copyright restrictions apply to individual documents on this web site. Unless otherwise stated, the following copyright statement applies to documents found on this site.

Permitted Use Visitors to the CRC website are granted permission to access our copyright material and to download the material onto electronic, magnetic, optical or similar storage media provided that such activities are for private research, study, reference or in-house use only.

Restricted Use Visitors to the CRC website must not copy, distribute or publish any copyright material taken from this website. Any other use of the material requires the formal permission of the CRC.

Applications should be sent to:

Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.

Applications under the FOIA 2000 Under the FOIA, anyone is entitled to request information not otherwise publicly available. Please note that the FOIA does not cover requests where you are asking for details relating to information about you as an individual. These requests will continue to be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act (see section 5 below.)

When someone requests information under the FOIA, the CRC is obliged to:

- Inform the applicant whether the CRC holds the information requested, subject to certain conditions and exemptions, and
- Communicate that information to the applicant, again subject to certain conditions and exemptions.

The CRC is obliged to respond in full to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

How to make a request If you are unable to find the information you require on our website or it is not shown in our publication scheme you can ask the CRC if it holds the information you require.

If information is required in a particular form (for example, a computer disc, or in large type) this should also be stated in the application. If you have difficulty in identifying the precise information you require, or difficulty in making the application in writing, our staff will be pleased to help you.

Applications should be in writing and include your name and correspondence address. You should also provide as much detail as possible to enable the CRC to identify the information sought.

To assist in this process we have a standard form that can be used to help you formulate your request.

You should send your request to:
Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.

If you are unable to formulate your request and you would like to ask for assistance please email CIO@ruralcommunities.gov.uk.

How to ask for information in a different language or format Information is provided in English. If you require information to be provided in any other language we may charge a fee to cover translation costs. Large type versions are available on request.

Reasons why information may not be provided The FOIA outlines the types of information, which, although held by a public authority, should not be made available to the public.

In the event that a request for information is made, and that information is subject to an exemption, we will at that point inform the applicant that an exemption applies. A decision that an exemption applies can be challenged by requesting an internal review of the decision. If dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, the applicant may appeal to the Information Commissioner (whose contact details appear under section 6).

The CRC must also comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, which gives individuals the right of access to information held about them by the CRC. For further information about how you can request to see information about yourself please go to section 5 of this guide.

5 Requests under the Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives people the right of access, subject to certain exemptions, to manual and computer records holding personal data about themselves. Individuals may request access to their records for a variety of reasons.

How to ask for your information An application for access to a record may be made to the CRC by any of the following:

- You yourself [the data subject]
- A person authorised in writing to make the application on your behalf
- Where the Data Subject is a child and incapable of making a request on his or her own behalf, a person having parental responsibility for the Data Subject
- Where the Data Subject is incapable of managing his or her own affairs, any person appointed by a court to manage those affairs

To help you send in your request for information you can use our subject access request form

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/makingarequestforyourpersonaldata>.

If you do not have access to the internet then please call 01242 521789 to request an information request form.

Please send your request in writing to:

Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.

Data Protection Statement

The CRC will use the contact details you provide to deal with your request for information, and for no other purpose. Please refer to our privacy statement for further details.

6 Complaints and appeals procedure

Rights of review and appeal under the FOIA The FOIA sets out a series of exemptions to protect confidential or other information where disclosure may prejudice the interests of the State or of third parties. Where the CRC invokes these provisions to withhold information, that decision is subject to a review process.

Decisions about deferral of access to information, the way in which access is given or the level of fees or charges, are also subject to review. The two review processes are set out below.

Rights of internal review If you are dissatisfied with the response from the CRC you may seek an internal review of that decision. A senior manager who has not previously been involved with your request will undertake that review.

If you have not received a response from the CRC within 20 working days of receipt of your initial application, it is likely to be regarded by the Information Commissioner as amounting to a refusal of your request and allows you to proceed to internal review.

Requests for internal review should be submitted in writing to:

Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.

An internal review must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Review by the Information Commissioner If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, or the handling, of the internal review conducted by the CRC, you may seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625-545700
Fax: 01625-545510

7 Formats and fees

Fees for information shown on the website Information is available free of charge from our web site i.e. there is no charge by us but you will need to meet any charges by your internet service provider, printing costs etc. For those without Internet access, a single copy is available by emailing info@ruralcommunities.gov.uk. Requests for multiple copies may attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopy and postage etc. We will let you know this at the time of your request (the charge would be payable in advance). We intend to make most of our information available online when this becomes practicable.

Fees for information shown in the publication scheme Unless otherwise stated, information is available free of charge from our publication scheme - i.e. there is no charge by us but you will need to meet any charges by your internet service provider, printing costs etc. For those without Internet access, a single copy is available from the contact details below.

Requests for multiple copies may attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopy and postage etc. We will let you know this at the time of your request; the charge would be payable in advance.

Information is provided in English. If you require information to be provided in any other language we may charge a fee to cover translation costs. Large type versions are available on request.

How much will it cost for information requested under FOIA? The CRC, in line with the Fees Regulations under the FOIA, will handle all requests for information where the time spent in efficiently locating or copying records, based on a standard hourly rate does not exceed 18 hours. Where a request is likely to take longer than 18 hours the CRC will not handle the request.

The CRC may charge a fee to cover the costs of providing the information (for example postage, copying, printing) where the cost is over £50.

Where we are to charge we will let you know the estimated fee beforehand and request payment before providing the information.

Information not available on-line We intend to make most of our information available online when this becomes practicable. In the interim information in the publication scheme can be requested from:

Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.

8 Feedback

We will publish information in accordance with this scheme and will monitor and review its operation in the light of public comment and feedback. We welcome suggestions for additional classes of information that could be included. Any questions, or feedback about this scheme should be sent in writing to:

Chief Information Officer
John Dower House,
Crescent Place,
Cheltenham,
GL50 3RA.
Email: CIO@ruralcommunities.gov.uk

9 Classes of Information

Class of Information (including definition where appropriate)	Documents in this class	Information is this class is available in the following formats	£ Indicates that this class includes chargeable material
About Us	<p>This class relates to information about the establishment of the Commission, its purpose and its remit.</p> <p>http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/about</p>	HTML, PDF	Free
Corporate Planning and Governance	<p>This class includes the corporate framework for the management of the Commission and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Governance Handbook • Published Annual Report • Approved Corporate Plan • Delegated Authority List • Approved Health & Safety Policy <p>These documents are being developed and will be published once approved.</p>	Word, PDF	Free
People	<p>This class includes information about the structure of the Commission, biographies of the Commissioners and Commission Management Board.</p> <p>Structure Charts</p> <p>Salary Profile (Commissioners, CEO)</p> <p>Biography of the CRC Commissioners http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/people/board</p> <p>Biography of the Commission Management Board (CMB) http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/people</p>	HTML, PDF, PowerPoint	Free
Commissioner Meetings	<p>This class includes information held in Minutes and agendas of Commissioners Meetings from October 2006. These meetings are open to the general public and operate on a monthly cycle.</p> <p>The minutes are supplemented with reports setting out policy decisions and management and results of corporate objectives.</p> <p><i>Information may be omitted if it is personal or confidential or it relates to an organisation's commercial interests as defined by the Freedom of Information legislation.</i></p> <p>http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/ourcommissioners</p>	HTML, PDF	Free

Class of Information (including definition where appropriate)	Documents in this class	Information in this class is available in the following formats	£ Indicates that this class includes chargeable material
Working for the Commission	<p>This class includes information relating to the employment terms and conditions, working practices as documented in the Approved staff handbook and details of current vacancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Vacancies http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/jobs • Overview of employment terms and conditions of service • Staff Handbook • Approved Learning & Development Policy <p>These documents are being developed and will be published once approved.</p>	HTML, PDF	Free
News & Events	<p>This class includes press and publicity materials relating to events run and/ or sponsored by the Commission and published press releases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events • Press Releases http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/press 		Free
Publications	<p>This class includes publications produced by the Commission to support its activities and report on outcomes from programmes.</p> <p>http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/publications</p>	PDF, Hard Copy, PowerPoint, Word	Charges may apply for Hard copies of some publications
Key Facts	<p>This class provides concise and simple answers to some of the questions we're asked on a regular basis. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people live in rural England? • How many villages are there in England? • How is employment structured in rural England? • What is the main industry of employment in rural England? • What occupation is most prevalent in rural England? <p>The information is extracted from published reports. These are posted on the Commission's website. http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/keyfacts</p>	PDF	Free
Projects	<p>This class includes published information providing an overview of the aims and objectives of current and completed projects delivered by the Commission. It also provides links to supporting information and publications linked to each project.</p> <p>http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/projects</p>	HTML, PDF	Free
Published Accounts	<p>This class relates to the approved published annual accounts.</p> <p>The first published accounts will be for the financial year ending 31 March 2007. The published accounts will be available once approved by DEFRA.</p>	PDF	Free

Class of Information (including definition where appropriate)	Documents in this class	Information is this class is available in the following formats	£ Indicates that this class includes chargeable material
Procurement	<p>This class relates to the approved procurement manual and the approved standard contractual terms of conditions for suppliers of goods and services.</p> <p>These documents are being developed and will be published once approved.</p>	Word, PDF	Free
Information Management	<p>This class incorporate the approved policies and procedures relating to the management of information and compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Privacy Policy http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/privacypolicy • Approved Copyright Statement http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/copyright • Complaint Procedure http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/howtocomplain • Information Request procedure and supporting templates to ask for information http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/content/freedomofinfo 	HTML, PDF, Word	Free