



# Freedom of Information Act 2000

## 2000 CHAPTER 36

### PART I

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

##### *Right to information*

#### **1 General right of access to information held by public authorities.**

- (1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—
  - (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
  - (b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.
- (2) Subsection (1) has effect subject to the following provisions of this section and to the provisions of sections 2, 9, 12 and 14.
- (3) Where a public authority—
  - (a) reasonably requires further information in order to identify and locate the information requested, and
  - (b) has informed the applicant of that requirement,the authority is not obliged to comply with subsection (1) unless it is supplied with that further information.
- (4) The information—
  - (a) in respect of which the applicant is to be informed under subsection (1)(a), or
  - (b) which is to be communicated under subsection (1)(b),is the information in question held at the time when the request is received, except that account may be taken of any amendment or deletion made between that time and the time when the information is to be communicated under subsection (1)(b), being an amendment or deletion that would have been made regardless of the receipt of the request.

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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- (5) A public authority is to be taken to have complied with subsection (1)(a) in relation to any information if it has communicated the information to the applicant in accordance with subsection (1)(b).
- (6) In this Act, the duty of a public authority to comply with subsection (1)(a) is referred to as “the duty to confirm or deny”.

## 2 Effect of the exemptions in Part II.

- (1) Where any provision of Part II states that the duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to any information, the effect of the provision is that where either—
- (a) the provision confers absolute exemption, or
  - (b) in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in disclosing whether the public authority holds the information,
- section 1(1)(a) does not apply.
- (2) In respect of any information which is exempt information by virtue of any provision of Part II, section 1(1)(b) does not apply if or to the extent that—
- (a) the information is exempt information by virtue of a provision conferring absolute exemption, or
  - (b) in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, the following provisions of Part II (and no others) are to be regarded as conferring absolute exemption—
- (a) section 21,
  - (b) section 23,
  - (c) section 32,
  - (d) section 34,
  - (e) section 36 so far as relating to information held by the House of Commons or the House of Lords,
  - [<sup>F1</sup>(ea) in section 37, paragraphs (a) to (ab) of subsection (1), and subsection (2) so far as relating to those paragraphs,]
  - [<sup>F2</sup>(f) section 40(1),
  - (fa) section 40(2) so far as relating to cases where the first condition referred to in that subsection is satisfied,]
  - (g) section 41, and
  - (h) section 44.

### Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 2(3)(ea) inserted (19.1.2011) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 46(1), 52(2), [Sch. 7 para. 2](#); S.I. 2011/46, [art. 3\(b\)\(i\)](#) (with art. 4)
- F2** S. 2(3)(f)(fa) substituted for s. 2(3)(f) (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 56](#) (with ss. 117, 209, 210, [Sch. 20 para. 52](#)); S.I. 2018/625, [reg. 2\(1\)\(g\)](#)

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### 3 Public authorities.

- (1) In this Act “public authority” means—
- (a) subject to section 4(4), any body which, any other person who, or the holder of any office which—
    - (i) is listed in Schedule 1, or
    - (ii) is designated by order under section 5, or
  - (b) a publicly-owned company as defined by section 6.
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, information is held by a public authority if—
- (a) it is held by the authority, otherwise than on behalf of another person, or
  - (b) it is held by another person on behalf of the authority.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1 S. 3 modified (29.9.2008 at 8.00 a.m.) by The Bradford & Bingley plc [Transfer of Securities and Property etc. Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/2546\)](#), **art. 41**
- C2 S. 3 modified (7.10.2008 at 9.30 a.m.) by The Heritable Bank plc [Transfer of Certain Rights and Liabilities Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/2644\)](#), **art. 29**
- C3 S. 3(1)(b) modified (30.3.2009 at 8.00 a.m.) by The Amendments to Law (Resolution of Dunfermline Building Society) Order (S.I. 2009/814), {art. 8(1)(a)(2)}
- C4 S. 3(1)(b) modified (22.2.2008) by The Northern Rock plc [Transfer Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/432\)](#), **art. 18(2)(a)**
- C5 S. 3(1)(b) excluded (1.3.2016) by The NRAM plc (formerly Northern Rock plc) [Consequential and Supplementary Provisions Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/114\)](#), arts. 1(1), **8(2)(a)**
- C6 S. 3(2) modified (1.4.2012) by [Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 \(c. 4\)](#), s. 29, **Sch. 3 para. 13(2)**; S.I. 2011/2576, art. 5
- C7 S. 3(2)(b) modified (30.3.2009 at 8.00 a.m.) by The Amendments to Law (Resolution of Dunfermline Building Society) Order (S.I. 2009/814), {art. 8(1)(b)(2)}
- C8 S. 3(2)(b) modified (8.10.2008 at 12.15 p.m.) by The Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander Limited [Transfer of Certain Rights and Liabilities Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/2674\)](#), **art. 31**
- C9 S. 3(2)(b) modified (22.2.2008) by The Northern Rock plc [Transfer Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/432\)](#), **art. 18(2)(b)**
- C10 S. 3(2)(b) excluded (1.3.2016) by The NRAM plc (formerly Northern Rock plc) [Consequential and Supplementary Provisions Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/114\)](#), arts. 1(1), **8(2)(b)**

### 4 Amendment of Schedule 1.

- (1) The [<sup>F3</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F4</sup>or the [<sup>F5</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] may by order amend Schedule 1 by adding to that Schedule a reference to any body or the holder of any office which (in either case) is not for the time being listed in that Schedule but as respects which both the first and the second conditions below are satisfied.
- (2) The first condition is that the body or office—
- (a) is established by virtue of Her Majesty’s prerogative or by an enactment or by subordinate legislation, or
  - (b) is established in any other way by a Minister of the Crown in his capacity as Minister, by a government department or by [<sup>F6</sup>the Welsh Ministers, the First Minister for Wales or the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government].
- (3) The second condition is—

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- (a) in the case of a body, that the body is wholly or partly constituted by appointment made by the Crown, by a Minister of the Crown, by a government department or by <sup>F7</sup>the Welsh Ministers, the First Minister for Wales or the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government], or
  - (b) in the case of an office, that appointments to the office are made by the Crown, by a Minister of the Crown, by a government department or by <sup>F7</sup>the Welsh Ministers, the First Minister for Wales or the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government].
- (4) If either the first or the second condition above ceases to be satisfied as respects any body or office which is listed in Part VI or VII of Schedule 1, that body or the holder of that office shall cease to be a public authority by virtue of the entry in question.
- (5) The <sup>F3</sup>Secretary of State]<sup>F8</sup>or the <sup>F9</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] may by order amend Schedule 1 by removing from Part VI or VII of that Schedule an entry relating to any body or office—
- (a) which has ceased to exist, or
  - (b) as respects which either the first or the second condition above has ceased to be satisfied.
- (6) An order under subsection (1) may relate to a specified person or office or to persons or offices falling within a specified description.
- (7) Before making an order under subsection (1), the <sup>F3</sup>Secretary of State]<sup>F10</sup>or the <sup>F11</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] shall—
- (a) if the order adds to Part II, III, IV or VI of Schedule 1 a reference to—
    - (i) a body whose functions are exercisable only or mainly in or as regards Wales, or
    - (ii) the holder of an office whose functions are exercisable only or mainly in or as regards Wales,
 consult <sup>F12</sup>the Welsh Ministers], and
  - (b) if the order relates to a body which, or the holder of any office who, if the order were made, would be a Northern Ireland public authority, consult the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland.
- (8) This section has effect subject to section 80.
- (9) In this section “Minister of the Crown” includes a Northern Ireland Minister.

#### Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in s. 4 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(a)**
- F4** Words in s. 4(1) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(a)**
- F5** Words in s. 4(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(a)** (with art. 12)
- F6** Words in s. 4(2)(b) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 78(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

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- F7** Words in s. 4(3)(a)(b) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 78(3)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F8** Words in s. 4(5) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(a)**
- F9** Words in s. 4(5) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(a)** (with art. 12)
- F10** Words in s. 4(7) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(a)**
- F11** Words in s. 4(7) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(a)** (with art. 12)
- F12** Words in s. 4(7)(a)(ii) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 78(4)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C11** S. 4(1) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(a) (with art. 5)
- C12** S. 4(5)(7) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(a) (with art. 5)

## 5 Further power to designate public authorities.

- (1) The [<sup>F13</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F14</sup>or the [<sup>F15</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] may by order designate as a public authority for the purposes of this Act any person who is neither listed in Schedule 1 nor capable of being added to that Schedule by an order under section 4(1), but who—
- (a) appears to the Secretary of State[<sup>F14</sup>or the [<sup>F15</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] to exercise functions of a public nature, or
- (b) is providing under a contract made with a public authority any service whose provision is a function of that authority.
- (2) An order under this section may designate a specified person or office or persons or offices falling within a specified description.
- (3) Before making an order under this section, the [<sup>F13</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F16</sup>or the [<sup>F17</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] shall consult every person to whom the order relates, or persons appearing to him to represent such persons.
- (4) This section has effect subject to section 80.

#### Textual Amendments

- F13** Words in s. 5 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(a)**
- F14** Words in s. 5(1) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(b)**

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- F15** Words in s. 5(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(b)** (with art. 12)
- F16** Words in s. 5(3) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(b)**
- F17** Words in s. 5(3) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(b)** (with art. 12)

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

- C13** S. 5(1)(3) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(b) (with art. 5)

**6 Publicly-owned companies.**

- (1) A company is a “publicly-owned company” for the purposes of section 3(1)(b) if—
- (a) it is wholly owned by the Crown, <sup>F18</sup>...
  - (b) it is wholly owned by [<sup>F19</sup>the wider public sector][<sup>F20</sup>], or
  - (c) it is wholly owned by the Crown and the wider public sector.]

[<sup>F21</sup>(2) For the purposes of this section—

- (a) a company is wholly owned by the Crown if, and only if, every member is a person falling within sub-paragraph (i) or (ii)—
  - (i) a Minister of the Crown, government department or company wholly owned by the Crown, or
  - (ii) a person acting on behalf of a Minister of the Crown, government department or company wholly owned by the Crown,
- (b) a company is wholly owned by the wider public sector if, and only if, every member is a person falling within sub-paragraph (i) or (ii)—
  - (i) a relevant public authority or a company wholly owned by the wider public sector, or
  - (ii) a person acting on behalf of a relevant public authority or of a company wholly owned by the wider public sector, and
- (c) a company is wholly owned by the Crown and the wider public sector if, and only if, condition A, B or C is met.

(2A) In subsection (2)(c)—

- (a) condition A is met if—
  - (i) at least one member is a person falling within subsection (2)(a)(i) or (ii),
  - (ii) at least one member is a person falling within subsection (2)(b)(i) or (ii), and
  - (iii) every member is a person falling within subsection (2)(a)(i) or (ii) or (b)(i) or (ii),
- (b) condition B is met if—
  - (i) at least one member is a person falling within subsection (2)(a)(i) or (ii) or (b)(i) or (ii),
  - (ii) at least one member is a company wholly owned by the Crown and the wider public sector, and
  - (iii) every member is a person falling within subsection (2)(a)(i) or (ii) or (b)(i) or (ii) or a company wholly owned by the Crown and the wider public sector, and

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- (c) condition C is met if every member is a company wholly owned by the Crown and the wider public sector.]

(3) In this section—

“company” includes any body corporate;

“Minister of the Crown” includes a Northern Ireland Minister.

[<sup>F22</sup> “ relevant public authority ” means any public authority listed in Schedule 1 other than—

a government department, or

any authority which is listed only in relation to particular information]

#### Textual Amendments

- F18** Word in s. 6(1)(a) repealed (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 103(2)(a), 120, [Sch. 10 Pt. 7](#) (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(b)
- F19** Words in s. 6(1)(b) substituted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 103(2)(b), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(b)
- F20** S. 6(1)(c) and word inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 103(2)(c), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(b)
- F21** S. 6(2)(2A) substituted for s. 6(2) (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 103(3), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(b)
- F22** Words in s. 6(3) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 103(4), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(b)

## 7 Public authorities to which Act has limited application.

- (1) Where a public authority is listed in Schedule 1 only in relation to information of a specified description, nothing in Parts I to V of this Act applies to any other information held by the authority.
- (2) An order under section 4(1) may, in adding an entry to Schedule 1, list the public authority only in relation to information of a specified description.
- (3) The [<sup>F23</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F24</sup>or the [<sup>F25</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] may by order amend Schedule 1—
- (a) by limiting to information of a specified description the entry relating to any public authority, or
- (b) by removing or amending any limitation to information of a specified description which is for the time being contained in any entry.
- (4) Before making an order under subsection (3), the [<sup>F23</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F26</sup>or the [<sup>F27</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] shall—
- [<sup>F28</sup>(a) if the order relates to the National Assembly for Wales or a Welsh public authority referred to in section 83(1)(b)(ii) (subsidiary of the Assembly Commission), consult the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales,
- (aa) if the order relates to the Welsh Assembly Government or a Welsh public authority other than one referred to in section 83(1)(b)(ii), consult the First Minister for Wales.]

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- (b) if the order relates to the Northern Ireland Assembly, consult the Presiding Officer of that Assembly, and
  - (c) if the order relates to a Northern Ireland department or a Northern Ireland public authority, consult the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland.
- (5) An order under section 5(1)(a) must specify the functions of the public authority designated by the order with respect to which the designation is to have effect; and nothing in Parts I to V of this Act applies to information which is held by the authority but does not relate to the exercise of those functions.
- (6) An order under section 5(1)(b) must specify the services provided under contract with respect to which the designation is to have effect; and nothing in Parts I to V of this Act applies to information which is held by the public authority designated by the order but does not relate to the provision of those services.
- (7) Nothing in Parts I to V of this Act applies in relation to any information held by a publicly-owned company which is excluded information in relation to that company.
- (8) In subsection (7) “excluded information”, in relation to a publicly-owned company, means information which is of a description specified in relation to that company in an order made by the [<sup>F23</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F29</sup>or the [<sup>F30</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] for the purposes of this subsection.
- (9) In this section “publicly-owned company” has the meaning given by section 6.

#### Textual Amendments

- F23** Words in s. 7 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(a)**
- F24** Words in s. 7(3) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(c)**
- F25** Words in s. 7(3) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(c)** (with art. 12)
- F26** Words in s. 7(4) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(c)**
- F27** Words in s. 7(4) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(c)** (with art. 12)
- F28** S. 7(4)(a)(aa) substituted for s. 7(4)(a) by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 79** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F29** Words in s. 7(8) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(c)**
- F30** Words in s. 7(8) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(c)** (with art. 12)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C14** S. 7(3) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(c) (with art. 5)
- C15** S. 7(4)(8) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(c) (with art. 5)

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## 8 Request for information.

- (1) In this Act any reference to a “request for information” is a reference to such a request which—
  - (a) is in writing,
  - (b) states the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence, and
  - (c) describes the information requested.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a), a request is to be treated as made in writing where the text of the request—
  - (a) is transmitted by electronic means,
  - (b) is received in legible form, and
  - (c) is capable of being used for subsequent reference.

## 9 Fees.

- (1) A public authority to whom a request for information is made may, within the period for complying with section 1(1), give the applicant a notice in writing (in this Act referred to as a “fees notice”) stating that a fee of an amount specified in the notice is to be charged by the authority for complying with section 1(1).
- (2) Where a fees notice has been given to the applicant, the public authority is not obliged to comply with section 1(1) unless the fee is paid within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant.
- (3) Subject to subsection (5), any fee under this section must be determined by the public authority in accordance with regulations made by the [<sup>F31</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office].
- (4) Regulations under subsection (3) may, in particular, provide—
  - (a) that no fee is to be payable in prescribed cases,
  - (b) that any fee is not to exceed such maximum as may be specified in, or determined in accordance with, the regulations, and
  - (c) that any fee is to be calculated in such manner as may be prescribed by the regulations.
- (5) Subsection (3) does not apply where provision is made by or under any enactment as to the fee that may be charged by the public authority for the disclosure of the information.

### Textual Amendments

- F31** Words in s. 9(3) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 14\(2\)\(d\)](#) (with art. 12)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C16** S. 9(3) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), [4\(1\)](#), (2)(a) (with art. 5)

### Commencement Information

- I1** S. 9 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 9 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make regulations, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 9 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), [art. 2](#)

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

## 10 Time for compliance with request.

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.
- (2) Where the authority has given a fees notice to the applicant and the fee is paid in accordance with section 9(2), the working days in the period beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant and ending with the day on which the fee is received by the authority are to be disregarded in calculating for the purposes of subsection (1) the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.
- (3) If, and to the extent that—
  - (a) section 1(1)(a) would not apply if the condition in section 2(1)(b) were satisfied, or
  - (b) section 1(1)(b) would not apply if the condition in section 2(2)(b) were satisfied,
 the public authority need not comply with section 1(1)(a) or (b) until such time as is reasonable in the circumstances; but this subsection does not affect the time by which any notice under section 17(1) must be given.
- (4) The [<sup>F32</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may by regulations provide that subsections (1) and (2) are to have effect as if any reference to the twentieth working day following the date of receipt were a reference to such other day, not later than the sixtieth working day following the date of receipt, as may be specified in, or determined in accordance with, the regulations.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (4) may—
  - (a) prescribe different days in relation to different cases, and
  - (b) confer a discretion on the Commissioner.
- (6) In this section—
 

“the date of receipt” means—

  - (a) the day on which the public authority receives the request for information, or
  - (b) if later, the day on which it receives the information referred to in section 1(3);

“working day” means any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the <sup>M1</sup>Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in any part of the United Kingdom.

### Textual Amendments

- F32** Words in s. 10(4) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(e)** (with art. 12)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C17** S. 10(1)(2) modified (1.1.2005) by [The Freedom of Information \(Time for Compliance with Request\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3364\)](#), **regs. 3(2), 4(2), 5(2), 6(2)**
- C18** S. 10(1)(2) modified (26.6.2009) by [The Freedom of Information \(Time for Compliance with Request\) Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1369\)](#), **reg. 2(2)**
- C19** S. 10(1)(2) modified (18.11.2010) by [The Freedom of Information \(Time for Compliance with Request\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2768\)](#), **regs. 1(2), 2**

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**C20** S. 10(4) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(b) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

**I2** S. 10 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 10 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make regulations, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 10 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

#### Marginal Citations

**M1** [1971 c. 80](#).

## 11 Means by which communication to be made.

- (1) Where, on making his request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by any one or more of the following means, namely—
- (a) the provision to the applicant of a copy of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant,
  - (b) the provision to the applicant of a reasonable opportunity to inspect a record containing the information, and
  - (c) the provision to the applicant of a digest or summary of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant,
- the public authority shall so far as reasonably practicable give effect to that preference.

[<sup>F33</sup>(1A) Where—

- (a) an applicant makes a request for information to a public authority in respect of information that is, or forms part of, a dataset held by the public authority, and
- (b) on making the request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by means of the provision to the applicant of a copy of the information in electronic form,

the public authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, provide the information to the applicant in an electronic form which is capable of re-use.]

- (2) In determining for the purposes of this section whether it is reasonably practicable to communicate information by particular means, the public authority may have regard to all the circumstances, including the cost of doing so.
- (3) Where the public authority determines that it is not reasonably practicable to comply with any preference expressed by the applicant in making his request, the authority shall notify the applicant of the reasons for its determination.
- (4) Subject to [<sup>F34</sup>subsections (1) and (1A)], a public authority may comply with a request by communicating information by any means which are reasonable in the circumstances.

[<sup>F35</sup>(5) In this Act “dataset” means information comprising a collection of information held in electronic form where all or most of the information in the collection—

- (a) has been obtained or recorded for the purpose of providing a public authority with information in connection with the provision of a service by the authority or the carrying out of any other function of the authority,
- (b) is factual information which—
  - (i) is not the product of analysis or interpretation other than calculation,and

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- (ii) is not an official statistic (within the meaning given by section 6(1) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007), and
- (c) remains presented in a way that (except for the purpose of forming part of the collection) has not been organised, adapted or otherwise materially altered since it was obtained or recorded.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F33** S. 11(1A) inserted (1.9.2013) by Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (c. 9), ss. 102(2)(a), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)
- F34** Words in s. 11(4) substituted (1.9.2013) by Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (c. 9), ss. 102(2)(b), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)
- F35** S. 11(5) inserted (1.9.2013) by Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (c. 9), ss. 102(2)(c), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)

#### [<sup>F36</sup>11A Release of datasets for re-use

- (1) This section applies where—
  - (a) a person makes a request for information to a public authority in respect of information that is, or forms part of, a dataset held by the authority,
  - (b) any of the dataset or part of a dataset so requested is a relevant copyright work,
  - (c) the public authority is the only owner of the relevant copyright work, and
  - (d) the public authority is communicating the relevant copyright work to the applicant in accordance with this Act.

[ But if the whole of the relevant copyright work is a document to which the Re-use of <sup>F37</sup>(1A) Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 apply, this section does not apply to the relevant copyright work.

- (1B) If part of the relevant copyright work is a document to which those Regulations apply—
  - (a) this section does not apply to that part, but
  - (b) this section does apply to the part to which the Regulations do not apply (and references in the following provisions of this section to the relevant copyright work are to be read as references to that part).]
- (2) When communicating the relevant copyright work to the applicant, the public authority must make the relevant copyright work available for re-use by the applicant in accordance with the terms of the specified licence.
- (3) The public authority may exercise any power that it has by virtue of regulations under section 11B to charge a fee in connection with making the relevant copyright work available for re-use in accordance with subsection (2).
- (4) Nothing in this section or section 11B prevents a public authority which is subject to a duty under subsection (2) from exercising any power that it has by or under an enactment other than this Act to charge a fee in connection with making the relevant copyright work available for re-use.
- (5) Where a public authority intends to charge a fee (whether in accordance with regulations under section 11B or as mentioned in subsection (4)) in connection with making a relevant copyright work available for re-use by an applicant, the authority

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must give the applicant a notice in writing (in this section referred to as a “ re-use fee notice ”) stating that a fee of an amount specified in, or determined in accordance with, the notice is to be charged by the authority in connection with complying with subsection (2).

- (6) Where a re-use fee notice has been given to the applicant, the public authority is not obliged to comply with subsection (2) while any part of the fee which is required to be paid is unpaid.
- (7) Where a public authority intends to charge a fee as mentioned in subsection (4), the re-use fee notice may be combined with any other notice which is to be given under the power which enables the fee to be charged.
- (8) In this section—

“copyright owner” has the meaning given by Part 1 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (see section 173 of that Act);

“copyright work” has the meaning given by Part 1 of the Act of 1988 (see section 1(2) of that Act);

“database” has the meaning given by section 3A of the Act of 1988;

“database right” has the same meaning as in Part 3 of the Copyright and Rights in Databases Regulations 1997 (S.I. 1997/3032);

“owner”, in relation to a relevant copyright work, means—

- (a) the copyright owner, or  
(b) the owner of the database right in the database;

“relevant copyright work” means—

- (a) a copyright work, or  
(b) a database subject to a database right,

but excludes a relevant Crown work or a relevant Parliamentary work;

“relevant Crown work” means—

- (a) a copyright work in relation to which the Crown is the copyright owner, or  
(b) a database in relation to which the Crown is the owner of the database right;

“relevant Parliamentary work” means—

- (a) a copyright work in relation to which the House of Commons or the House of Lords is the copyright owner, or  
(b) a database in relation to which the House of Commons or the House of Lords is the owner of the database right;

“the specified licence” is the licence specified by the [<sup>F38</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] in a code of practice issued under section 45, and the [<sup>F38</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may specify different licences for different purposes.

#### Textual Amendments

**F36** Ss. 11A, 11B inserted (31.7.2013 for the insertion of s. 11B, 1.9.2013 in so far as not already in force) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. **102(3)**, **120** (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, arts. 2, 3(a)

**F37** S. 11A(1A)(1B) inserted (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015](#) (S.I. 2015/1415), regs. 1, **21(2)** (with regs. 5, 11(4), 21(8))

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**F38** Words in s. 11A(8) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(f)** (with art. 12)

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

**C21** S. 11A(8) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(c) (with art. 5)

**11B Power to charge fees in relation to release of datasets for re-use**

- ( 1 ) The [<sup>F39</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may, with the consent of the Treasury, make provision by regulations about the charging of fees by public authorities in connection with making relevant copyright works available for re-use under section 11A(2) or by virtue of section 19(2A)(c).
- (2) Regulations under this section may, in particular—
- (a) prescribe cases in which fees may, or may not, be charged,
  - (b) prescribe the amount of any fee payable or provide for any such amount to be determined in such manner as may be prescribed,
  - (c) prescribe, or otherwise provide for, times at which fees, or parts of fees, are payable,
  - (d) require the provision of information about the manner in which amounts of fees are determined,
  - (e) make different provision for different purposes.
- (3) Regulations under this section may, in prescribing the amount of any fee payable or providing for any such amount to be determined in such manner as may be prescribed, provide for a reasonable return on investment.
- (4) In this section “ relevant copyright work ” has the meaning given by section 11A(8). ]

**Textual Amendments**

**F36** Ss. 11A, 11B inserted (31.7.2013 for the insertion of s. 11B, 1.9.2013 in so far as not already in force) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(3)**, 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, arts. 2, 3(a)

**F39** Words in s. 11B(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(g)** (with art. 12)

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

**C22** S. 11B(1) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(d) (with art. 5)

**12 Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit.**

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

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- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The [<sup>F40</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
  - (a) by one person, or
  - (b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (5) The [<sup>F41</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

#### Textual Amendments

- F40** Words in s. 12(4) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(h)** (with art. 12)
- F41** Words in s. 12(5) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(h)** (with art. 12)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C23** S. 12(3)-(5) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(e) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

- I3** S. 12 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 12 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make regulations, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 12 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

### 13 Fees for disclosure where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit.

- (1) A public authority may charge for the communication of any information whose communication—
  - (a) is not required by section 1(1) because the cost of complying with the request for information exceeds the amount which is the appropriate limit for the purposes of section 12(1) and (2), and
  - (b) is not otherwise required by law,such fee as may be determined by the public authority in accordance with regulations made by the [<sup>F42</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office].
- (2) Regulations under this section may, in particular, provide—
  - (a) that any fee is not to exceed such maximum as may be specified in, or determined in accordance with, the regulations, and
  - (b) that any fee is to be calculated in such manner as may be prescribed by the regulations.

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- (3) Subsection (1) does not apply where provision is made by or under any enactment as to the fee that may be charged by the public authority for the disclosure of the information.

#### Textual Amendments

**F42** Words in s. 13(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(i)** (with art. 12)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C24** S. 13(1) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(f) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

**I4** S. 13 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 13 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make regulations, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 13 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

## 14 Vexatious or repeated requests.

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the request is vexatious.
- (2) Where a public authority has previously complied with a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

## 15 Special provisions relating to public records transferred to Public Record Office, etc.

- (1) Where—
- the appropriate records authority receives a request for information which relates to information which is, or if it existed would be, contained in a transferred public record, and
  - either of the conditions in subsection (2) is satisfied in relation to any of that information,
- that authority shall, within the period for complying with section 1(1), send a copy of the request to the responsible authority.
- (2) The conditions referred to in subsection (1)(b) are—
- that the duty to confirm or deny is expressed to be excluded only by a provision of Part II not specified in subsection (3) of section 2, and
  - that the information is exempt information only by virtue of a provision of Part II not specified in that subsection.
- (3) On receiving the copy, the responsible authority shall, within such time as is reasonable in all the circumstances, inform the appropriate records authority of the determination required by virtue of subsection (3) or (4) of section 66.
- (4) In this Act “transferred public record” means a public record which has been transferred—

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- (a) to the Public Record Office,
- (b) to another place of deposit appointed by the [<sup>F43</sup>Secretary of State] under the <sup>M2</sup>Public Records Act 1958, or
- (c) to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

(5) In this Act—

“appropriate records authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, means—

- (a) in a case falling within subsection (4)(a), the Public Record Office,
- (b) in a case falling within subsection (4)(b), the [<sup>F44</sup>Secretary of State], and
- (c) in a case falling within subsection (4)(c), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland;

“responsible authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, means—

- (a) in the case of a record transferred as mentioned in subsection (4)(a) or (b) from a government department in the charge of a Minister of the Crown, the Minister of the Crown who appears to the [<sup>F44</sup>Secretary of State] to be primarily concerned,
- (b) in the case of a record transferred as mentioned in subsection (4)(a) or (b) from any other person, the person who appears to the [<sup>F44</sup>Secretary of State] to be primarily concerned,
- (c) in the case of a record transferred to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland from a government department in the charge of a Minister of the Crown, the Minister of the Crown who appears to the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister to be primarily concerned,
- (d) in the case of a record transferred to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland from a Northern Ireland department, the Northern Ireland Minister who appears to the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister to be primarily concerned, or
- (e) in the case of a record transferred to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland from any other person, the person who appears to the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister to be primarily concerned.

#### Textual Amendments

**F43** Words in s. 15(4)(b) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(a)**

**F44** Words in s. 15(5) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(a)**

#### Commencement Information

**I5** S. 15 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 15 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 15(4)(5) in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), **art. 2**; s. 15 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

#### Marginal Citations

**M2** 1958 c. 51.

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## **16 Duty to provide advice and assistance.**

- (1) It shall be the duty of a public authority to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to it.
- (2) Any public authority which, in relation to the provision of advice or assistance in any case, conforms with the code of practice under section 45 is to be taken to comply with the duty imposed by subsection (1) in relation to that case.

### *Refusal of request*

## **17 Refusal of request.**

- (1) A public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is to any extent relying on a claim that any provision of Part II relating to the duty to confirm or deny is relevant to the request or on a claim that information is exempt information must, within the time for complying with section 1(1), give the applicant a notice which—
  - (a) states that fact,
  - (b) specifies the exemption in question, and
  - (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.
- (2) Where—
  - (a) in relation to any request for information, a public authority is, as respects any information, relying on a claim—
    - (i) that any provision of Part II which relates to the duty to confirm or deny and is not specified in section 2(3) is relevant to the request, or
    - (ii) that the information is exempt information only by virtue of a provision not specified in section 2(3), and
  - (b) at the time when the notice under subsection (1) is given to the applicant, the public authority (or, in a case falling within section 66(3) or (4), the responsible authority) has not yet reached a decision as to the application of subsection (1)(b) or (2)(b) of section 2,

the notice under subsection (1) must indicate that no decision as to the application of that provision has yet been reached and must contain an estimate of the date by which the authority expects that such a decision will have been reached.
- (3) A public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is to any extent relying on a claim that subsection (1)(b) or (2)(b) of section 2 applies must, either in the notice under subsection (1) or in a separate notice given within such time as is reasonable in the circumstances, state the reasons for claiming—
  - (a) that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in disclosing whether the authority holds the information, or
  - (b) that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- (4) A public authority is not obliged to make a statement under subsection (1)(c) or (3) if, or to the extent that, the statement would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempt information.

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- (5) A public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is relying on a claim that section 12 or 14 applies must, within the time for complying with section 1(1), give the applicant a notice stating that fact.
- (6) Subsection (5) does not apply where—
  - (a) the public authority is relying on a claim that section 14 applies,
  - (b) the authority has given the applicant a notice, in relation to a previous request for information, stating that it is relying on such a claim, and
  - (c) it would in all the circumstances be unreasonable to expect the authority to serve a further notice under subsection (5) in relation to the current request.
- (7) A notice under subsection (1), (3) or (5) must—
  - (a) contain particulars of any procedure provided by the public authority for dealing with complaints about the handling of requests for information or state that the authority does not provide such a procedure, and
  - (b) contain particulars of the right conferred by section 50.

*F45 The Information Commissioner . . .*

**Textual Amendments**

**F45** Words in cross-heading preceding s. 18 omitted (18.1.2010) by virtue of [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\)](#), arts. 1(1), 5(1), **Sch. 2 para. 67**

**18 The Information Commissioner** <sup>F46</sup> . . .

<sup>F47</sup>(1) . . . . .

<sup>F48</sup>(2) . . . . .

(3) In this Act—

(a) the Information Commissioner is referred to as “the Commissioner”, <sup>F49</sup> . . .

<sup>F49</sup>(b) . . . . .

(4) Schedule 2 (which makes provision consequential on subsections (1) and (2) and amendments of the <sup>M3</sup>Data Protection Act 1998 relating to the extension by this Act of the functions of the Commissioner and the Tribunal) has effect.

<sup>F50</sup>(5) . . . . .

<sup>F50</sup>(6) . . . . .

<sup>F50</sup>(7) . . . . .

**Textual Amendments**

**F46** Words in s. 18 heading omitted (18.1.2010) by virtue of [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\)](#), arts. 1(1), 5(1), **Sch. 2 para. 68(a)**

**F47** S. 18(1) omitted (25.5.2018) by virtue of [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 57** (with ss. 117, 209, 210); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

**F48** S. 18(2) omitted (18.1.2010) by virtue of [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\)](#), arts. 1(1), 5(1), **Sch. 2 para. 68(b)**

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- F49** S. 18(3)(b) and preceding word omitted (18.1.2010) by virtue of [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\)](#), arts. 1(1), 5(1), **Sch. 2 para. 68(c)**
- F50** S. 18(5)-(7) repealed (16.3.2015) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 105(5), 120, **Sch. 10 Pt. 8** (with s. 97); [S.I. 2015/587](#), art. 2(a)(c)

#### Commencement Information

- I6** S. 18 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 18(4) in force for certain purposes at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(i); s. 18(1) wholly in force and s. 18(4) in force for certain further purposes at 30.1.2001, see s. 87(2)(a)(c); s. 18(2)(3)(5)-(7) in force and s. 18(4) in force for certain further purposes at 14.5.2001 by [S.I. 2001/1637](#), art. 2(a)(b); s. 18 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

#### Marginal Citations

- M3** 1998 c. 29.

### Publication schemes

#### 19 Publication schemes.

- (1) It shall be the duty of every public authority—
- (a) to adopt and maintain a scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the Commissioner (in this Act referred to as a “publication scheme”),
  - (b) to publish information in accordance with its publication scheme, and
  - (c) from time to time to review its publication scheme.
- (2) A publication scheme must—
- (a) specify classes of information which the public authority publishes or intends to publish,
  - (b) specify the manner in which information of each class is, or is intended to be, published, and
  - (c) specify whether the material is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.
- [<sup>F51</sup>(2A) A publication scheme must, in particular, include a requirement for the public authority concerned—
- (a) to publish—
    - (i) any dataset held by the authority in relation to which a person makes a request for information to the authority, and
    - (ii) any up-dated version held by the authority of such a dataset, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate for the dataset to be published,
  - (b) where reasonably practicable, to publish any dataset the authority publishes by virtue of paragraph (a) in an electronic form which is capable of re-use,
  - (c) where [<sup>F52</sup>subject to subsections (2AA) and (2AB)] any information in a dataset published by virtue of paragraph (a) is a relevant copyright work in relation to which the authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use in accordance with the terms of the specified licence.

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[ If the whole of the relevant copyright work is a document to which the Re-use of<sup>F53</sup>(2AA) Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 apply, subsections (2A)(c) and (2B) to (2F) do not apply to the relevant copyright work.

(2AB) If part of the relevant copyright work is a document to which those Regulations apply—

- (a) subsections (2A)(c) and (2B) to (2F) do not apply to that part, but
- (b) those provisions do apply to the part to which the Regulations do not apply (and references in the following provisions of this section to the relevant copyright work are to be read as references to that part).]

(2B) The public authority may exercise any power that it has by virtue of regulations under section 11B to charge a fee in connection with making the relevant copyright work available for re-use in accordance with a requirement imposed by virtue of subsection (2A)(c).

(2C) Nothing in this section or section 11B prevents a public authority which is subject to such a requirement from exercising any power that it has by or under an enactment other than this Act to charge a fee in connection with making the relevant copyright work available for re-use.

(2D) Where a public authority intends to charge a fee (whether in accordance with regulations under section 11B or as mentioned in subsection (2C)) in connection with making a relevant copyright work available for re-use by an applicant, the authority must give the applicant a notice in writing (in this section referred to as a “ re-use fee notice ”) stating that a fee of an amount specified in, or determined in accordance with, the notice is to be charged by the authority in connection with complying with the requirement imposed by virtue of subsection (2A)(c).

(2E) Where a re-use fee notice has been given to the applicant, the public authority is not obliged to comply with the requirement imposed by virtue of subsection (2A)(c) while any part of the fee which is required to be paid is unpaid.

(2F) Where a public authority intends to charge a fee as mentioned in subsection (2C), the re-use fee notice may be combined with any other notice which is to be given under the power which enables the fee to be charged.]

(3) In adopting or reviewing a publication scheme, a public authority shall have regard to the public interest—

- (a) in allowing public access to information held by the authority, and
- (b) in the publication of reasons for decisions made by the authority.

(4) A public authority shall publish its publication scheme in such manner as it thinks fit.

(5) The Commissioner may, when approving a scheme, provide that his approval is to expire at the end of a specified period.

(6) Where the Commissioner has approved the publication scheme of any public authority, he may at any time give notice to the public authority revoking his approval of the scheme as from the end of the period of six months beginning with the day on which the notice is given.

(7) Where the Commissioner—

- (a) refuses to approve a proposed publication scheme, or
- (b) revokes his approval of a publication scheme,

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he must give the public authority a statement of his reasons for doing so.

[<sup>F54</sup>(8) In this section—

“ copyright owner ” has the meaning given by Part 1 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (see section 173 of that Act);

“ copyright work ” has the meaning given by Part 1 of the Act of 1988 (see section 1(2) of that Act);

“ database ” has the meaning given by section 3A of the Act of 1988;

“ database right ” has the same meaning as in Part 3 of the Copyright and Rights in Databases Regulations 1997 ( S.I. 1997/3032);

“ owner ”, in relation to a relevant copyright work, means—

- (a) the copyright owner, or
- (b) the owner of the database right in the database;

“ relevant copyright work ” means—

- (a) a copyright work, or
- (b) a database subject to a database right,

but excludes a relevant Crown work or a relevant Parliamentary work;

“ relevant Crown work ” means—

- (a) a copyright work in relation to which the Crown is the copyright owner, or
- (b) a database in relation to which the Crown is the owner of the database right;

“ relevant Parliamentary work ” means—

- (a) a copyright work in relation to which the House of Commons or the House of Lords is the copyright owner, or
- (b) a database in relation to which the House of Commons or the House of Lords is the owner of the database right;

“ the specified licence ” has the meaning given by section 11A(8). ]

#### Textual Amendments

- F51** S. 19(2A)-(2F) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(4)(a)**, 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)
- F52** Words in s. 19(2A)(c) inserted (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **21(3)(a)** (with regs. 5, 11(4), 21(8))
- F53** S. 19(2AA)(2AB) inserted (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **21(3)(b)** (with regs. 5, 11(4), 21(8))
- F54** S. 19(8) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(4)(b)**, 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)

#### Commencement Information

- I7** S. 19 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 19 in force for certain purposes at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(b) (3); s. 19(5)-(7) in force at 30.11.2002 and s. 19(1)-(4) in force for certain purposes at 28.2.2003 and 30.6.2003 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **arts. 3, 4, 5** (as amended (1.4.2006) by [S.I. 2005/3239](#), art. 9(2), [Sch. 2 para. 8](#), [S.I. 2006/63](#), art. 3(2)(b) and [S.I. 2006/64](#), art. 3(2)(b)); s. 19(1)-(4) in force for certain further purposes at 31.10.2003, 29.2.2004 and 30.6.2004 by [S.I. 2003/2603](#), **arts. 2, 3, 4**; s. 19 in force in so far as not already in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

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## 20 Model publication schemes.

- (1) The Commissioner may from time to time approve, in relation to public authorities falling within particular classes, model publication schemes prepared by him or by other persons.
- (2) Where a public authority falling within the class to which an approved model scheme relates adopts such a scheme without modification, no further approval of the Commissioner is required so long as the model scheme remains approved; and where such an authority adopts such a scheme with modifications, the approval of the Commissioner is required only in relation to the modifications.
- (3) The Commissioner may, when approving a model publication scheme, provide that his approval is to expire at the end of a specified period.
- (4) Where the Commissioner has approved a model publication scheme, he may at any time publish, in such manner as he thinks fit, a notice revoking his approval of the scheme as from the end of the period of six months beginning with the day on which the notice is published.
- (5) Where the Commissioner refuses to approve a proposed model publication scheme on the application of any person, he must give the person who applied for approval of the scheme a statement of the reasons for his refusal.
- (6) Where the Commissioner refuses to approve any modifications under subsection (2), he must give the public authority a statement of the reasons for his refusal.
- (7) Where the Commissioner revokes his approval of a model publication scheme, he must include in the notice under subsection (4) a statement of his reasons for doing so.

### Commencement Information

**18** S. 20 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 20 in force for certain purposes at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(c)(3); s. 20 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

## PART II

### EXEMPT INFORMATION

## 21 Information accessible to applicant by other means.

- (1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1 is exempt information.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)—
  - (a) information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment, and
  - (b) information is to be taken to be reasonably accessible to the applicant if it is information which the public authority or any other person is obliged by or under any enactment to communicate (otherwise than by making the information available for inspection) to members of the public on request, whether free of charge or on payment.

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- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), information which is held by a public authority and does not fall within subsection (2)(b) is not to be regarded as reasonably accessible to the applicant merely because the information is available from the public authority itself on request, unless the information is made available in accordance with the authority's publication scheme and any payment required is specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme.

## 22 Information intended for future publication.

- (1) Information is exempt information if—
- (a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),
  - (b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and
  - (c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) which falls within subsection (1).

### [<sup>F55</sup>22A Research

- (1) Information obtained in the course of, or derived from, a programme of research is exempt information if—
- (a) the programme is continuing with a view to the publication, by a public authority or any other person, of a report of the research (whether or not including a statement of that information), and
  - (b) disclosure of the information under this Act before the date of publication would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
    - (i) the programme,
    - (ii) the interests of any individual participating in the programme,
    - (iii) the interests of the authority which holds the information, or
    - (iv) the interests of the authority mentioned in paragraph (a) (if it is a different authority from that which holds the information).
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1) if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1)(b).]

#### Textual Amendments

**F55** S. 22A inserted (1.10.2014) by [Intellectual Property Act 2014 \(c. 18\)](#), ss. 20, 24(1); S.I. 2014/2330, art. 3, Sch.

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## 23 Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters.

- (1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in subsection (3).
- (2) A certificate signed by a Minister of the Crown certifying that the information to which it applies was directly or indirectly supplied by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in subsection (3) shall, subject to section 60, be conclusive evidence of that fact.
- (3) The bodies referred to in subsections (1) and (2) are—
  - (a) the Security Service,
  - (b) the Secret Intelligence Service,
  - (c) the Government Communications Headquarters,
  - (d) the special forces,
  - (e) the Tribunal established under section 65 of the Regulation of<sup>M4</sup> Investigatory Powers Act 2000,
  - (f) the Tribunal established under section 7 of the<sup>M5</sup> Interception of Communications Act 1985,
  - (g) the Tribunal established under section 5 of the<sup>M6</sup> Security Service Act 1989,
  - (h) the Tribunal established under section 9 of the<sup>M7</sup> Intelligence Services Act 1994,
  - (i) the Security Vetting Appeals Panel,
  - (j) the Security Commission,
  - (k) the National Criminal Intelligence Service,<sup>F56</sup> . . .
  - (l) the Service Authority for the National Criminal Intelligence Service.
  - [<sup>F57</sup>(m) the Serious Organised Crime Agency.]
  - [<sup>F58</sup>(n) the National Crime Agency.]
  - [<sup>F59</sup>(o) the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament.]
- (4) In subsection (3)(c) “the Government Communications Headquarters” includes any unit or part of a unit of the armed forces of the Crown which is for the time being required by the Secretary of State to assist the Government Communications Headquarters in carrying out its functions.
- (5) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) which was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in subsection (3).

### Textual Amendments

- F56** Word in s. 23(3)(k) repealed (1.4.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 59, 174, 178, Sch. 4 para. 159, Sch. 17; S.I. 2006/378, art. 4(1), Sch. para. 10 (subject to art. 4(2)-(7))
- F57** S. 23(3)(m) inserted (1.4.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 59, 178, Sch. 4 para. 159; S.I. 2006/378, art. 4(1), Sch. para. 10 (subject to art. 4(2)-(7))
- F58** S. 23(3)(n) inserted (27.5.2013) by Crime and Courts Act 2013 (c. 22), s. 61(2), Sch. 8 para. 102; S.I. 2013/1042, art. 3(l)
- F59** S. 23(3)(o) inserted (25.6.2013) by Justice and Security Act 2013 (c. 18), s. 20(1), Sch. 2 para. 5(2); S.I. 2013/1482, art. 2 (with arts. 3, 4)

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#### **Marginal Citations**

**M4** 2000 c. 23.

**M5** 1985 c. 56.

**M6** 1989 c. 5.

**M7** 1994 c. 13.

## **24 National security.**

- (1) Information which does not fall within section 23(1) is exempt information if exemption from section 1(1)(b) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, exemption from section 1(1)(a) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.
- (3) A certificate signed by a Minister of the Crown certifying that exemption from section 1(1)(b), or from section 1(1)(a) and (b), is, or at any time was, required for the purpose of safeguarding national security shall, subject to section 60, be conclusive evidence of that fact.
- (4) A certificate under subsection (3) may identify the information to which it applies by means of a general description and may be expressed to have prospective effect.

## **25 Certificates under ss. 23 and 24: supplementary provisions.**

- (1) A document purporting to be a certificate under section 23(2) or 24(3) shall be received in evidence and deemed to be such a certificate unless the contrary is proved.
- (2) A document which purports to be certified by or on behalf of a Minister of the Crown as a true copy of a certificate issued by that Minister under section 23(2) or 24(3) shall in any legal proceedings be evidence (or, in Scotland, sufficient evidence) of that certificate.
- (3) The power conferred by section 23(2) or 24(3) on a Minister of the Crown shall not be exercisable except by a Minister who is a member of the Cabinet or by the Attorney General, the Advocate General for Scotland or the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

## **26 Defence.**

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
  - (a) the defence of the British Islands or of any colony, or
  - (b) the capability, effectiveness or security of any relevant forces.
- (2) In subsection (1)(b) “relevant forces” means—
  - (a) the armed forces of the Crown, and
  - (b) any forces co-operating with those forces,or any part of any of those forces.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

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## 27 International relations.

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
  - (a) relations between the United Kingdom and any other State,
  - (b) relations between the United Kingdom and any international organisation or international court,
  - (c) the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or
  - (d) the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad.
- (2) Information is also exempt information if it is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, any information obtained from a State, organisation or court is confidential at any time while the terms on which it was obtained require it to be held in confidence or while the circumstances in which it was obtained make it reasonable for the State, organisation or court to expect that it will be so held.
- (4) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a)—
  - (a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1), or
  - (b) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) which is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom or from an international organisation or international court.
- (5) In this section—

“international court” means any international court which is not an international organisation and which is established—

  - (a) by a resolution of an international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member, or
  - (b) by an international agreement to which the United Kingdom is a party;

“international organisation” means any international organisation whose members include any two or more States, or any organ of such an organisation;

“State” includes the government of any State and any organ of its government, and references to a State other than the United Kingdom include references to any territory outside the United Kingdom.

## 28 Relations within the United Kingdom.

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between any administration in the United Kingdom and any other such administration.
- (2) In subsection (1) “administration in the United Kingdom” means—
  - (a) the government of the United Kingdom,
  - (b) the Scottish Administration,
  - (c) the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, or
  - [<sup>F60</sup>(d) the Welsh Assembly Government.]

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- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

#### Textual Amendments

**F60** S. 28(2)(d) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 80** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

### 29 The economy.

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
- (a) the economic interests of the United Kingdom or of any part of the United Kingdom, or
  - (b) the financial interests of any administration in the United Kingdom, as defined by section 28(2).
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

### 30 Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities.

- (1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of—
- (a) any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained—
    - (i) whether a person should be charged with an offence, or
    - (ii) whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it,
  - (b) any investigation which is conducted by the authority and in the circumstances may lead to a decision by the authority to institute criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct, or
  - (c) any criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct.
- (2) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if—
- (a) it was obtained or recorded by the authority for the purposes of its functions relating to—
    - (i) investigations falling within subsection (1)(a) or (b),
    - (ii) criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct,
    - (iii) investigations (other than investigations falling within subsection (1) (a) or (b)) which are conducted by the authority for any of the purposes specified in section 31(2) and either by virtue of Her Majesty's prerogative or by virtue of powers conferred by or under any enactment, or
    - (iv) civil proceedings which are brought by or on behalf of the authority and arise out of such investigations, and

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- (b) it relates to the obtaining of information from confidential sources.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1) or (2).
- (4) In relation to the institution or conduct of criminal proceedings or the power to conduct them, references in subsection (1)(b) or (c) and subsection (2)(a) to the public authority include references—
- (a) to any officer of the authority,
  - (b) in the case of a government department other than a Northern Ireland department, to the Minister of the Crown in charge of the department, and
  - (c) in the case of a Northern Ireland department, to the Northern Ireland Minister in charge of the department.
- [<sup>F61</sup>(5) In this section—
- “ criminal proceedings ” includes service law proceedings (as defined by section 324(5) of the Armed Forces Act 2006);
  - “ offence ” includes a service offence (as defined by section 50 of that Act).
- ]
- (6) In the application of this section to Scotland—
- (a) in subsection (1)(b), for the words from “a decision” to the end there is substituted “ a decision by the authority to make a report to the procurator fiscal for the purpose of enabling him to determine whether criminal proceedings should be instituted ”,
  - (b) in subsections (1)(c) and (2)(a)(ii) for “which the authority has power to conduct” there is substituted “ which have been instituted in consequence of a report made by the authority to the procurator fiscal ”, and
  - (c) for any reference to a person being charged with an offence there is substituted a reference to the person being prosecuted for the offence.

#### Textual Amendments

**F61** S. 30(5) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and 31.10.2009 otherwise) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378(1), 383(2), [Sch. 16 para. 176](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C25** S. 30 modified (24.4.2009 for certain purposes and 31.10.2009 otherwise) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\)](#), arts. 1(3), 205, [Sch. 1 para. 46\(1\)](#)

**C26** S. 30(5) modified (24.4.2009 for certain purposes and 31.10.2009 otherwise) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\)](#), arts. 1(3), 205, [Sch. 1 para. 46\(2\)](#)

## 31 Law enforcement.

- (1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
- (a) the prevention or detection of crime,
  - (b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders,
  - (c) the administration of justice,

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- (d) the assessment or collection of any tax or duty or of any imposition of a similar nature,
  - (e) the operation of the immigration controls,
  - (f) the maintenance of security and good order in prisons or in other institutions where persons are lawfully detained,
  - (g) the exercise by any public authority of its functions for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2),
  - (h) any civil proceedings which are brought by or on behalf of a public authority and arise out of an investigation conducted, for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2), by or on behalf of the authority by virtue of Her Majesty's prerogative or by virtue of powers conferred by or under an enactment, or
  - (i) any inquiry held under the [<sup>F62</sup>Inquiries into Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths etc. (Scotland) Act 2016] to the extent that the inquiry arises out of an investigation conducted, for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2), by or on behalf of the authority by virtue of Her Majesty's prerogative or by virtue of powers conferred by or under an enactment.
- (2) The purposes referred to in subsection (1)(g) to (i) are—
- (a) the purpose of ascertaining whether any person has failed to comply with the law,
  - (b) the purpose of ascertaining whether any person is responsible for any conduct which is improper,
  - (c) the purpose of ascertaining whether circumstances which would justify regulatory action in pursuance of any enactment exist or may arise,
  - (d) the purpose of ascertaining a person's fitness or competence in relation to the management of bodies corporate or in relation to any profession or other activity which he is, or seeks to become, authorised to carry on,
  - (e) the purpose of ascertaining the cause of an accident,
  - (f) the purpose of protecting charities against misconduct or mismanagement (whether by trustees or other persons) in their administration,
  - (g) the purpose of protecting the property of charities from loss or misapplication,
  - (h) the purpose of recovering the property of charities,
  - (i) the purpose of securing the health, safety and welfare of persons at work, and
  - (j) the purpose of protecting persons other than persons at work against risk to health or safety arising out of or in connection with the actions of persons at work.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

#### Textual Amendments

**F62** Words in s. 31(1)(i) substituted (S.) (15.6.2017) by [Inquiries into Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(asp 2\)](#), s. 42(2), [sch. 2 para. 8](#); S.S.I. 2017/155, reg. 2 (with regs. 4(2)5) and words in s. 31(1)(i) substituted (E.W. N.I.) (15.6.2017) by [The Inquiries into Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2016 \(Consequential Provisions and Modifications\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/1142\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. para. 8](#) (with art. 7(2)); ; S.S.I. 2017/155, reg. 2

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## 32 Court records, etc.

- (1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it is held only by virtue of being contained in—
  - (a) any document filed with, or otherwise placed in the custody of, a court for the purposes of proceedings in a particular cause or matter,
  - (b) any document served upon, or by, a public authority for the purposes of proceedings in a particular cause or matter, or
  - (c) any document created by—
    - (i) a court, or
    - (ii) a member of the administrative staff of a court,for the purposes of proceedings in a particular cause or matter.
- (2) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it is held only by virtue of being contained in—
  - (a) any document placed in the custody of a person conducting an inquiry or arbitration, for the purposes of the inquiry or arbitration, or
  - (b) any document created by a person conducting an inquiry or arbitration, for the purposes of the inquiry or arbitration.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of this section.
- (4) In this section—
  - (a) “court” includes any tribunal or body exercising the judicial power of the State,
  - (b) “proceedings in a particular cause or matter” includes [<sup>F63</sup>any investigation under Part 1 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, any inquest under the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 and any] post-mortem examination,
  - (c) “inquiry” means any inquiry or hearing held under any provision contained in, or made under, an enactment, and
  - (d) except in relation to Scotland, “arbitration” means any arbitration to which Part I of the <sup>M8</sup>Arbitration Act 1996 applies.

### Textual Amendments

**F63** Words in s. 32(4)(b) substituted (25.7.2013) by [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(c. 25\), s. 182\(4\)\(e\), Sch. 21 para. 44](#) (with s. 180); S.I. 2013/1869, art. 2(o)(xvi)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C27** S. 32(2) excluded (7.6.2005) by [Inquiries Act 2005 \(c. 12\), ss. 18\(3\), 51\(1\)](#) (with ss. 44, 50); S.I. 2005/1432, art. 2

### Marginal Citations

**M8** 1996 c. 23.

## 33 Audit functions.

- (1) This section applies to any public authority which has functions in relation to—
  - (a) the audit of the accounts of other public authorities, or

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- (b) the examination of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which other public authorities use their resources in discharging their functions.
- (2) Information held by a public authority to which this section applies is exempt information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the exercise of any of the authority's functions in relation to any of the matters referred to in subsection (1).
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to a public authority to which this section applies if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice the exercise of any of the authority's functions in relation to any of the matters referred to in subsection (1).

#### **34 Parliamentary privilege.**

- (1) Information is exempt information if exemption from section 1(1)(b) is required for the purpose of avoiding an infringement of the privileges of either House of Parliament.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not apply if, or to the extent that, exemption from section 1(1)(a) is required for the purpose of avoiding an infringement of the privileges of either House of Parliament.
- (3) A certificate signed by the appropriate authority certifying that exemption from section 1(1)(b), or from section 1(1)(a) and (b), is, or at any time was, required for the purpose of avoiding an infringement of the privileges of either House of Parliament shall be conclusive evidence of that fact.
- (4) In subsection (3) “the appropriate authority” means—
  - (a) in relation to the House of Commons, the Speaker of that House, and
  - (b) in relation to the House of Lords, the Clerk of the Parliaments.

#### **35 Formulation of government policy, etc.**

- (1) Information held by a government department or by [<sup>F64</sup>the Welsh Assembly Government] is exempt information if it relates to—
  - (a) the formulation or development of government policy,
  - (b) Ministerial communications,
  - (c) the provision of advice by any of the Law Officers or any request for the provision of such advice, or
  - (d) the operation of any Ministerial private office.
- (2) Once a decision as to government policy has been taken, any statistical information used to provide an informed background to the taking of the decision is not to be regarded—
  - (a) for the purposes of subsection (1)(a), as relating to the formulation or development of government policy, or
  - (b) for the purposes of subsection (1)(b), as relating to Ministerial communications.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).

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(4) In making any determination required by section 2(1)(b) or (2)(b) in relation to information which is exempt information by virtue of subsection (1)(a), regard shall be had to the particular public interest in the disclosure of factual information which has been used, or is intended to be used, to provide an informed background to decision-taking.

(5) In this section—

“government policy” includes the policy of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the policy of [<sup>F65</sup>the Welsh Assembly Government];

“the Law Officers” means the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Advocate General for Scotland, the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor General for Scotland [<sup>F66</sup>, the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government] and the Attorney General for Northern Ireland;

“Ministerial communications” means any communications—

- (a) between Ministers of the Crown,
- (b) between Northern Ireland Ministers, including Northern Ireland junior Ministers, or
- (c) [<sup>F67</sup>between members of the Welsh Assembly Government]

and includes, in particular, proceedings of the Cabinet or of any committee of the Cabinet, proceedings of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and proceedings of [<sup>F68</sup>the Cabinet or any committee of the Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government];

“Ministerial private office” means any part of a government department which provides personal administrative support to a Minister of the Crown, to a Northern Ireland Minister or a Northern Ireland junior Minister or [<sup>F69</sup>any part of the administration of the Welsh Assembly Government providing personal administrative support to the members of the Welsh Assembly Government];

“Northern Ireland junior Minister” means a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly appointed as a junior Minister under section 19 of the <sup>M9</sup>Northern Ireland Act 1998.

#### Textual Amendments

- F64** Words in s. 35(1) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 81(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\)](#) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F65** S. 35(5): words in definition of "government policy" substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 81(3)(a)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\)](#) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F66** S. 35(5): words in definition of "the Law Officers" substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 81(3)(b)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in

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accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))

- F67** S. 35(5): para. (c) in definition of "Ministerial communications" substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, [Sch. 1 para. 81\(c\)\(i\)](#) (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))
- F68** S. 35(5): words in definition of "Ministerial communications" substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, [Sch. 1 para. 81\(c\)\(ii\)](#) (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))
- F69** S. 35(5): words in definition of "Ministerial private office" substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, [Sch. 1 para. 81\(d\)](#) (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))

#### Marginal Citations

**M9** 1998 c. 47.

### 36 Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs.

- (1) This section applies to—
- (a) information which is held by a government department or by <sup>[F70]</sup>the Welsh Assembly Government] and is not exempt information by virtue of section 35, and
  - (b) information which is held by any other public authority.
- (2) Information to which this section applies is exempt information if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act—
- (a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice—
    - (i) the maintenance of the convention of the collective responsibility of Ministers of the Crown, or
    - (ii) the work of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, or
    - <sup>[F71]</sup>(iii) the work of the Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government.]
  - (b) would, or would be likely to, inhibit—
    - (i) the free and frank provision of advice, or
    - (ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or
  - (c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information to which this section applies (or would apply if held by the public authority) if, or to the extent that, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, have any of the effects mentioned in subsection (2).

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- (4) In relation to statistical information, subsections (2) and (3) shall have effect with the omission of the words “in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person”.
- (5) In subsections (2) and (3) “qualified person”—
- (a) in relation to information held by a government department in the charge of a Minister of the Crown, means any Minister of the Crown,
  - (b) in relation to information held by a Northern Ireland department, means the Northern Ireland Minister in charge of the department,
  - (c) in relation to information held by any other government department, means the commissioners or other person in charge of that department,
  - (d) in relation to information held by the House of Commons, means the Speaker of that House,
  - (e) in relation to information held by the House of Lords, means the Clerk of the Parliaments,
  - (f) in relation to information held by the Northern Ireland Assembly, means the Presiding Officer,
  - <sup>F72</sup>(g) in relation to information held by the Welsh Assembly Government, means the Welsh Ministers or the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government,
  - (ga) in relation to information held by the National Assembly for Wales, means the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales,
  - (gb) in relation to information held by any Welsh public authority (other than one referred to in section 83(1)(b)(ii) (subsidiary of the Assembly Commission), the Auditor General for Wales [<sup>F73</sup>, the Wales Audit Office] or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales), means—
    - (i) the public authority, or
    - (ii) any officer or employee of the authority authorised by the Welsh Ministers or the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government”,
  - (gc) in relation to information held by a Welsh public authority referred to in section 83(1)(b)(ii), means—
    - (i) the public authority, or
    - (ii) any officer or employee of the authority authorised by the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales,]
  - (i) in relation to information held by the National Audit Office [<sup>F74</sup>or the Comptroller and Auditor General], means the Comptroller and Auditor General,
  - (j) in relation to information held by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, means the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland,
  - (k) in relation to information held by the Auditor General for Wales [<sup>F75</sup>or the Wales Audit Office], means the Auditor General for Wales,
  - <sup>F76</sup>(ka) in relation to information held by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, means the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,]
  - (l) in relation to information held by any Northern Ireland public authority other than the Northern Ireland Audit Office, means—
    - (i) the public authority, or
    - (ii) any officer or employee of the authority authorised by the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland acting jointly,
  - (m) in relation to information held by the Greater London Authority, means the Mayor of London,

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- (n) in relation to information held by a functional body within the meaning of the <sup>M10</sup>Greater London Authority Act 1999, means the chairman of that functional body, and
  - (o) in relation to information held by any public authority not falling within any of paragraphs (a) to (n), means—
    - (i) a Minister of the Crown,
    - (ii) the public authority, if authorised for the purposes of this section by a Minister of the Crown, or
    - (iii) any officer or employee of the public authority who is authorised for the purposes of this section by a Minister of the Crown.
- (6) Any authorisation for the purposes of this section—
- (a) may relate to a specified person or to persons falling within a specified class,
  - (b) may be general or limited to particular classes of case, and
  - (c) may be granted subject to conditions.
- (7) A certificate signed by the qualified person referred to in subsection (5)(d) or (e) above certifying that in his reasonable opinion—
- (a) disclosure of information held by either House of Parliament, or
  - (b) compliance with section 1(1)(a) by either House,
- would, or would be likely to, have any of the effects mentioned in subsection (2) shall be conclusive evidence of that fact.

### Textual Amendments

- F70** Words in s. 36(1)(a) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 82(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F71** S. 36(2)(a)(iii) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 82(3)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F72** S. 36(5)(g)-(gc) substituted for s. 36(g)(h) by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 82(4)(a)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F73** Words in s. 36(5)(gb) inserted (E.W.) (1.4.2014) by [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#), s. 35(2), **Sch. 4 para. 18(2)** (with [Sch. 3 para. 3](#)); S.I. 2013/1466, art. 3(1)
- F74** Words in s. 36(5)(i) inserted (1.4.2012) by [Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 \(c. 4\)](#), s. 29, **Sch. 5 para. 22(1)**; S.I. 2011/2576, art. 5
- F75** Words in s. 36(5)(k) inserted (E.W.) (1.4.2014) by [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#), s. 35(2), **Sch. 4 para. 18(3)** (with [Sch. 3 para. 3](#)); S.I. 2013/1466, art. 3(1)
- F76** S. 36(5)(ka) inserted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 82(4)(b)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

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#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C28** S. 36(5)(i) amended (1.4.2012) by [Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 \(c. 4\)](#), s. 29, [Sch. 5 para. 22\(2\)](#); S.I. 2011/2576, art. 5

#### Marginal Citations

**M10** 1999 c. 29.

### 37 Communications with Her Majesty, etc. and honours.

- (1) Information is exempt information if it relates to—
- [<sup>F77</sup>(a) communications with the Sovereign,
    - (aa) communications with the heir to, or the person who is for the time being second in line of succession to, the Throne,
    - (ab) communications with a person who has subsequently acceded to the Throne or become heir to, or second in line to, the Throne,
    - (ac) communications with other members of the Royal Family (other than communications which fall within any of paragraphs (a) to (ab) because they are made or received on behalf of a person falling within any of those paragraphs), and
    - (ad) communications with the Royal Household (other than communications which fall within any of paragraphs (a) to (ac) because they are made or received on behalf of a person falling within any of those paragraphs), or]
    - (b) the conferring by the Crown of any honour or dignity.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).

#### Textual Amendments

**F77** S. 37(1)(a)-(ad) substituted for s. 37(1)(a) (19.1.2011) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 46(1), 52(2), [Sch. 7 para. 3](#); S.I. 2011/46, [art. 3\(b\)\(i\)](#) (with art. 4)

### 38 Health and safety.

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—
- (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
  - (b) endanger the safety of any individual.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, have either of the effects mentioned in subsection (1).

### 39 Environmental information.

- (1) Information is exempt information if the public authority holding it—
- (a) is obliged by [<sup>F78</sup>environmental information regulations] to make the information available to the public in accordance with the regulations, or

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(b) would be so obliged but for any exemption contained in the regulations.

[<sup>F79</sup>(1A) In subsection (1) “ environmental information regulations ” means—

- (a) regulations made under section 74, or
- (b) regulations made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 for the purpose of implementing any [<sup>F80</sup>EU] obligation relating to public access to, and the dissemination of, information on the environment.]

(2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).

(3) Subsection (1)(a) does not limit the generality of section 21(1).

#### Textual Amendments

**F78** Words in s. 39(1)(a) substituted (1.1.2005) by [The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3391\)](#), **reg. 20(2)** (with **reg. 3**)

**F79** S. 39(1A) inserted (1.1.2005) by [The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3391\)](#), **reg. 20(3)** (with **reg. 3**)

**F80** Words in s. 39(1A)(b) substituted (22.4.2011) by [The Treaty of Lisbon \(Changes in Terminology\) Order 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1043\)](#), arts. 3, **6(1)(e)**

## 40 Personal information.

(1) Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject.

(2) Any information to which a request for information relates is also exempt information if—

- (a) it constitutes personal data which [<sup>F81</sup>does] not fall within subsection (1), and
- (b) [<sup>F82</sup>the first, second or third] condition below is satisfied.

[<sup>F83</sup>(3A) The first condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act—

- (a) would contravene any of the data protection principles, or
- (b) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded.

(3B) The second condition is that the disclosure of the information to a member of the public otherwise than under this Act would contravene Article 21 of the GDPR (general processing: right to object to processing).]

[<sup>F84</sup>(4A) The third condition is that—

- (a) on a request under Article 15(1) of the GDPR (general processing: right of access by the data subject) for access to personal data, the information would be withheld in reliance on provision made by or under section 15, 16 or 26 of, or Schedule 2, 3 or 4 to, the Data Protection Act 2018, or
- (b) on a request under section 45(1)(b) of that Act (law enforcement processing: right of access by the data subject), the information would be withheld in reliance on subsection (4) of that section.]

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[<sup>F85</sup>(5A) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).

(5B) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to other information if or to the extent that any of the following applies—

- (a) giving a member of the public the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a)—
  - (i) would (apart from this Act) contravene any of the data protection principles, or
  - (ii) would do so if the exemptions in section 24(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (manual unstructured data held by public authorities) were disregarded;
- (b) giving a member of the public the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) contravene Article 21 of the GDPR (general processing: right to object to processing);
- (c) on a request under Article 15(1) of the GDPR (general processing: right of access by the data subject) for confirmation of whether personal data is being processed, the information would be withheld in reliance on a provision listed in subsection (4A)(a);
- (d) on a request under section 45(1)(a) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (law enforcement processing: right of access by the data subject), the information would be withheld in reliance on subsection (4) of that section.]

<sup>F86</sup>(6) .....

[<sup>F87</sup>(7) In this section—

“the data protection principles” means the principles set out in—

- (a) Article 5(1) of the GDPR, and
- (b) section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018;

“data subject” has the same meaning as in the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3 of that Act);

“the GDPR”, “personal data”, “processing” and references to a provision of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018 have the same meaning as in Parts 5 to 7 of that Act (see section 3(2), (4), (10), (11) and (14) of that Act).

(8) In determining for the purposes of this section whether the lawfulness principle in Article 5(1)(a) of the GDPR would be contravened by the disclosure of information, Article 6(1) of the GDPR (lawfulness) is to be read as if the second sub-paragraph (disapplying the legitimate interests gateway in relation to public authorities) were omitted.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F81** Words in s. 40(2)(a) substituted (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 58\(2\)\(a\)](#) (with [ss. 117, 209, 210](#), [Sch. 20 para. 52](#)); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F82** Words in s. 40(2)(b) substituted (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 58\(2\)\(b\)](#) (with [ss. 117, 209, 210](#), [Sch. 20 para. 52](#)); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F83** [S. 40\(3A\)\(3B\)](#) substituted for s. 40(3) (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 58\(3\)](#) (with [ss. 117, 209, 210](#), [Sch. 20 para. 52](#)); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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- F84** S. 40(4A) substituted for s. 40(4) (25.5.2018) by Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 58(4)** (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 52); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F85** S. 40(5A)(5B) substituted for s. 40(5) (25.5.2018) by Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 58(5)** (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 52); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F86** S. 40(6) omitted (25.5.2018) by virtue of Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 58(6)** (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 52); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F87** S. 40(7)(8) substituted for s. 40(7) (25.5.2018) by Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 58(7)** (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 52); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

#### 41 Information provided in confidence.

- (1) Information is exempt information if—
- (a) it was obtained by the public authority from any other person (including another public authority), and
  - (b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) constitute an actionable breach of confidence.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C29** S. 41(1) extended (E.W.) (5.11.2013) by Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013 (anaw 6), **ss. 61(8), 64(1)** (with Sch. 5 para. 7)

#### 42 Legal professional privilege.

- (1) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege or, in Scotland, to confidentiality of communications could be maintained in legal proceedings is exempt information.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would involve the disclosure of any information (whether or not already recorded) in respect of which such a claim could be maintained in legal proceedings.

#### 43 Commercial interests.

- (1) Information is exempt information if it constitutes a trade secret.
- (2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, prejudice the interests mentioned in subsection (2).

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#### 44 Prohibitions on disclosure.

- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it—
- (a) is prohibited by or under any enactment,
  - (b) is incompatible with any [<sup>F88</sup>[<sup>F89</sup>assimilated] obligation], or
  - (c) would constitute or be punishable as a contempt of court.
- (2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) fall within any of paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1).

##### Textual Amendments

**F88** Words in s. 44(1)(b) substituted (31.12.2020) by [The Freedom of Information Act 2000 \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2018 \(S.I. 2018/1353\)](#), regs. 1, 2; 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

**F89** Word in s. 44(1)(b) substituted (1.1.2024) by [The Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Act 2023 \(Consequential Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/1424\)](#), reg. 1(2), **Sch. para. 46**

##### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C30** S. 44 excluded (1.12.2007) by [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 \(c. 18\)](#), ss. **40(1)(2)**, 74; S.I. 2007/3388, **art. 2(f)**

### PART III

#### GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF [<sup>F90</sup>[<sup>F91</sup>MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE], SECRETARY OF STATE] AND INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

##### Textual Amendments

**F90** Words in Pt. III heading substituted (9.12.2015) by virtue of [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(6)**

**F91** Words in Pt. III heading substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2) (j)** (with art. 12)

#### 45 Issue of code of practice [<sup>F92</sup>by the Minister for the Cabinet Office].

- (1) The [<sup>F93</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] shall issue, and may from time to time revise, a code of practice providing guidance to public authorities as to the practice which it would, in his opinion, be desirable for them to follow in connection with the discharge of the authorities' functions under Part I.
- (2) The code of practice must, in particular, include provision relating to—
- (a) the provision of advice and assistance by public authorities to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information to them,
  - (b) the transfer of requests by one public authority to another public authority by which the information requested is or may be held,

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- (c) consultation with persons to whom the information requested relates or persons whose interests are likely to be affected by the disclosure of information,
  - (d) the inclusion in contracts entered into by public authorities of terms relating to the disclosure of information,
  - [<sup>F94</sup>(da) the disclosure by public authorities of datasets held by them,] and
  - (e) the provision by public authorities of procedures for dealing with complaints about the handling by them of requests for information.
- [<sup>F95</sup>(2A) Provision of the kind mentioned in subsection (2)(da) may, in particular, include provision relating to—
- (a) the giving of permission for datasets to be re-used,
  - (b) the disclosure of datasets in an electronic form which is capable of re-use,
  - (c) the making of datasets available for re-use in accordance with the terms of a licence,
  - (d) other matters relating to the making of datasets available for re-use,
  - (e) standards applicable to public authorities in connection with the disclosure of datasets.]
- (3) [<sup>F96</sup>Any code under this section] may make different provision for different public authorities.
- (4) Before issuing or revising any code under this section, the [<sup>F97</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] shall consult the Commissioner.
- (5) The [<sup>F98</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] shall lay before each House of Parliament any code or revised code made under this section.

#### Textual Amendments

- F92** Words in s. 45 heading substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(4)** (with art. 12)
- F93** Words in s. 45(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(k)** (with art. 12)
- F94** S. 45(2)(da) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(5)(a)**, 120 (with s. 97); [S.I. 2013/1906](#), art. 3(a)
- F95** S. 45(2A) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(5)(b)**, 120 (with s. 97); [S.I. 2013/1906](#), art. 3(a)
- F96** Words in s. 45(3) substituted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(5)(c)**, 120 (with s. 97); [S.I. 2013/1906](#), art. 3(a)
- F97** Words in s. 45(4) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(k)** (with art. 12)
- F98** Words in s. 45(5) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(k)** (with art. 12)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C31** S. 45(1) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(g) (with art. 5)
- C32** S. 45(4)(5) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(g) (with art. 5)

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### Commencement Information

- I9** S. 45 wholly in force at 30.11.2002; s. 45 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make code of practice, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 45 otherwise in force at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812, art. 2\(b\)](#)

## 46 Issue of code of practice by <sup>F99</sup>Secretary of State].

- (1) The <sup>F100</sup>Secretary of State] shall issue, and may from time to time revise, a code of practice providing guidance to relevant authorities as to the practice which it would, in his opinion, be desirable for them to follow in connection with the keeping, management and destruction of their records.
- (2) For the purpose of facilitating the performance by the Public Record Office, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and other public authorities of their functions under this Act in relation to records which are public records for the purposes of the <sup>M11</sup>Public Records Act 1958 or the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, the code may also include guidance as to—
  - (a) the practice to be adopted in relation to the transfer of records under section 3(4) of the <sup>M12</sup>Public Records Act 1958 or section 3 of the <sup>M13</sup>Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, and
  - (b) the practice of reviewing records before they are transferred under those provisions.
- (3) In exercising his functions under this section, the <sup>F101</sup>Secretary of State] shall have regard to the public interest in allowing public access to information held by relevant authorities.
- (4) The code may make different provision for different relevant authorities.
- (5) Before issuing or revising any code under this section the <sup>F102</sup>Secretary of State] shall consult—
  - <sup>F103</sup>(a) the <sup>F104</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office],
  - (b) the Commissioner, and
  - (c) in relation to Northern Ireland, the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister.
- (6) The <sup>F105</sup>Secretary of State] shall lay before each House of Parliament any code or revised code made under this section.
- (7) In this section “relevant authority” means—
  - (a) any public authority, and
  - (b) any office or body which is not a public authority but whose administrative and departmental records are public records for the purposes of the <sup>M14</sup>Public Records Act 1958 or the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923.

### Textual Amendments

- F99** Words in s. 46 heading substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(c)**
- F100** Words in s. 46(1) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(b)**
- F101** Words in s. 46(3) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(b)**

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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- F102** Words in s. 46(5) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(b)**
- F103** S. 46(5)(a) inserted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(2)**
- F104** Words in s. 46(5)(a) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(l)** (with art. 12)
- F105** Words in s. 46(6) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(b)**

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C33** S. 46(1) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **6(1)(b)**, (3)(a) (with art. 7)
- C34** S. 46(3) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **6(1)(b)**, (3)(a) (with art. 7)
- C35** S. 46(5)(6) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **6(1)(b)**, (3)(a) (with art. 7)
- C36** S. 46(5)(a) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(h) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

- I10** S. 46 wholly in force at 30.11.2002; s. 46 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make code of practice, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 46 otherwise in force at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **art. 2(b)**

#### Marginal Citations

- M11** 1958 c. 51.  
**M12** 1958 c. 51.  
**M13** 1923 c. 20 (N.I.)  
**M14** 1958 c. 51.

## 47 General functions of Commissioner.

- (1) It shall be the duty of the Commissioner to promote the following of good practice by public authorities and, in particular, so to perform his functions under this Act as to promote the observance by public authorities of—
  - (a) the requirements of this Act, and
  - (b) the provisions of the codes of practice under sections 45 and 46.
- (2) The Commissioner shall arrange for the dissemination in such form and manner as he considers appropriate of such information as it may appear to him expedient to give to the public—
  - (a) about the operation of this Act,
  - (b) about good practice, and
  - (c) about other matters within the scope of his functions under this Act, and may give advice to any person as to any of those matters.
- (3) The Commissioner may, with the consent of any public authority, assess whether that authority is following good practice.
- (4) The Commissioner may charge such sums as he may <sup>F106</sup>... determine for any [<sup>F107</sup>relevant] services provided by the Commissioner under this section.

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[<sup>F108</sup>(4A) In subsection (4) “relevant services” means—

- (a) the provision to the same person of more than one copy of any published material where each of the copies of the material is either provided on paper, a portable disk which stores the material electronically or a similar medium,
- (b) the provision of training, or
- (c) the provision of conferences.

(4B) The [<sup>F109</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] may by order amend subsection (4A).

(4C) An order under subsection (4B) may include such transitional or saving provision as the [<sup>F109</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] considers appropriate.

(4D) The [<sup>F109</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] must consult the Commissioner before making an order under subsection (4B).]

(5) The Commissioner shall from time to time as he considers appropriate—

- (a) consult the Keeper of Public Records about the promotion by the Commissioner of the observance by public authorities of the provisions of the code of practice under section 46 in relation to records which are public records for the purposes of the <sup>M15</sup>Public Records Act 1958, and
- (b) consult the Deputy Keeper of the Records of Northern Ireland about the promotion by the Commissioner of the observance by public authorities of those provisions in relation to records which are public records for the purposes of the <sup>M16</sup>Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923.

(6) In this section “good practice”, in relation to a public authority, means such practice in the discharge of its functions under this Act as appears to the Commissioner to be desirable, and includes (but is not limited to) compliance with the requirements of this Act and the provisions of the codes of practice under sections 45 and 46.

#### Textual Amendments

**F106** Words in s. 47(4) repealed (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 107(3)(a)(i), 120, [Sch. 10 Pt. 8](#) (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(d)

**F107** Word in s. 47(4) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 107(3)(a)(ii), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(d)

**F108** S. 47(4A)-(4D) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 107(3)(b), 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(d)

**F109** Words in s. 47(4B)-(4D) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 14\(2\)\(m\)](#) (with art. 12)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C37** S. 47 applied (with modifications) (1.1.2005) by [The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3391\)](#), [reg. 16\(5\)](#) (with reg. 3)

**C38** S. 47(4B)-(4D) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), [4\(1\)](#), [\(2\)\(i\)](#) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

**I11** S. 47 wholly in force at 30.11.2002; s. 47(2)-(6) in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(d); s. 47(1) in force at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), [art. 2\(c\)](#)

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#### Marginal Citations

**M15** 1958 c. 51.

**M16** 1923 c. 20.

## 48 Recommendations as to good practice.

- (1) If it appears to the Commissioner that the practice of a public authority in relation to the exercise of its functions under this Act does not conform with that proposed in the codes of practice under sections 45 and 46, he may give to the authority a recommendation (in this section referred to as a “practice recommendation”) specifying the steps which ought in his opinion to be taken for promoting such conformity.
- (2) A practice recommendation must be given in writing and must refer to the particular provisions of the code of practice with which, in the Commissioner’s opinion, the public authority’s practice does not conform.
- (3) Before giving to a public authority other than the Public Record Office a practice recommendation which relates to conformity with the code of practice under section 46 in respect of records which are public records for the purposes of the <sup>M17</sup>Public Records Act 1958, the Commissioner shall consult the Keeper of Public Records.
- (4) Before giving to a public authority other than the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland a practice recommendation which relates to conformity with the code of practice under section 46 in respect of records which are public records for the purposes of the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, the Commissioner shall consult the Deputy Keeper of the Records of Northern Ireland.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C39** S. 48 applied (with modifications) (1.1.2005) by [The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3391\)](#), [reg. 16\(5\)](#) (with [reg. 3](#))

#### Commencement Information

**I12** S. 48 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 48 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 48(1)(2) in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), [art. 2\(d\)](#); s. 48 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), [art. 2](#); s. 48 otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), [art. 2](#)

#### Marginal Citations

**M17** 1958 c. 51.

## <sup>F110</sup>49 Reports to be laid before Parliament.

.....

#### Textual Amendments

**F110** S. 49 omitted (25.5.2018) by virtue of [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 59](#) (with [ss. 117, 209, 210](#), [Sch. 20 para. 21](#)); [S.I. 2018/625](#), [reg. 2\(1\)\(g\)](#)

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## PART IV

### ENFORCEMENT

#### 50 Application for decision by Commissioner.

- (1) Any person (in this section referred to as “the complainant”) may apply to the Commissioner for a decision whether, in any specified respect, a request for information made by the complainant to a public authority has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of Part I.
- (2) On receiving an application under this section, the Commissioner shall make a decision unless it appears to him—
  - (a) that the complainant has not exhausted any complaints procedure which is provided by the public authority in conformity with the code of practice under section 45,
  - (b) that there has been undue delay in making the application,
  - (c) that the application is frivolous or vexatious, or
  - (d) that the application has been withdrawn or abandoned.
- (3) Where the Commissioner has received an application under this section, he shall either—
  - (a) notify the complainant that he has not made any decision under this section as a result of the application and of his grounds for not doing so, or
  - (b) serve notice of his decision (in this Act referred to as a “decision notice”) on the complainant and the public authority.
- (4) Where the Commissioner decides that a public authority—
  - (a) has failed to communicate information, or to provide confirmation or denial, in a case where it is required to do so by section 1(1), or
  - (b) has failed to comply with any of the requirements of sections 11 and 17,the decision notice must specify the steps which must be taken by the authority for complying with that requirement and the period within which they must be taken.
- (5) A decision notice must contain particulars of the right of appeal conferred by section 57.
- (6) Where a decision notice requires steps to be taken by the public authority within a specified period, the time specified in the notice must not expire before the end of the period within which an appeal can be brought against the notice and, if such an appeal is brought, no step which is affected by the appeal need be taken pending the determination or withdrawal of the appeal.
- (7) This section has effect subject to section 53.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C40** S. 50 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(4)(9)}
- C41** S. 50 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, 18 (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C42** S. 50 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, 19 (with regs. 5, 11(4))

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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### Commencement Information

- I13** S. 50 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 50 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 50 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

## 51 Information notices.

- (1) If the Commissioner—
- (a) has received an application under section 50, or
  - (b) reasonably requires any information—
    - (i) for the purpose of determining whether a public authority has complied or is complying with any of the requirements of Part I, or
    - (ii) for the purpose of determining whether the practice of a public authority in relation to the exercise of its functions under this Act conforms with that proposed in the codes of practice under sections 45 and 46,
 he may serve the authority with a notice (in this Act referred to as “an information notice”) requiring it, within such time as is specified in the notice, to furnish the Commissioner, in such form as may be so specified, with such information relating to the application, to compliance with Part I or to conformity with the code of practice as is so specified.
- (2) An information notice must contain—
- (a) in a case falling within subsection (1)(a), a statement that the Commissioner has received an application under section 50, or
  - (b) in a case falling within subsection (1)(b), a statement—
    - (i) that the Commissioner regards the specified information as relevant for either of the purposes referred to in subsection (1)(b), and
    - (ii) of his reasons for regarding that information as relevant for that purpose.
- (3) An information notice must also contain particulars of the right of appeal conferred by section 57.
- (4) The time specified in an information notice must not expire before the end of the period within which an appeal can be brought against the notice and, if such an appeal is brought, the information need not be furnished pending the determination or withdrawal of the appeal.
- (5) An authority shall not be required by virtue of this section to furnish the Commissioner with any information in respect of—
- (a) any communication between a professional legal adviser and his client in connection with the giving of legal advice to the client with respect to his obligations, liabilities or rights under this Act, or
  - (b) any communication between a professional legal adviser and his client, or between such an adviser or his client and any other person, made in connection with or in contemplation of proceedings under or arising out of this Act (including proceedings before the Tribunal) and for the purposes of such proceedings.

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- (6) In subsection (5) references to the client of a professional legal adviser include references to any person representing such a client.
- (7) The Commissioner may cancel an information notice by written notice to the authority on which it was served.
- (8) In this section “information” includes unrecorded information.

#### **Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

- C43** S. 51 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(5)(9)}
- C44** S. 51 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

#### **Commencement Information**

- I14** S. 51 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 51 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 51 in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **art. 2(d)(e)**; s. 51 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), **art. 2** and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

## **52 Enforcement notices.**

- (1) If the Commissioner is satisfied that a public authority has failed to comply with any of the requirements of Part I, the Commissioner may serve the authority with a notice (in this Act referred to as “an enforcement notice”) requiring the authority to take, within such time as may be specified in the notice, such steps as may be so specified for complying with those requirements.
- (2) An enforcement notice must contain—
  - (a) a statement of the requirement or requirements of Part I with which the Commissioner is satisfied that the public authority has failed to comply and his reasons for reaching that conclusion, and
  - (b) particulars of the right of appeal conferred by section 57.
- (3) An enforcement notice must not require any of the provisions of the notice to be complied with before the end of the period within which an appeal can be brought against the notice and, if such an appeal is brought, the notice need not be complied with pending the determination or withdrawal of the appeal.
- (4) The Commissioner may cancel an enforcement notice by written notice to the authority on which it was served.
- (5) This section has effect subject to section 53.

#### **Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

- C45** S. 52 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(6)(9)}
- C46** S. 52 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

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**C47** S. 52 excluded (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, 22(7) (with regs. 5, 11(4))

#### Commencement Information

**I15** S. 52 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 52 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 52 in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), art. 2(e), s. 52 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), art. 2

### 53 Exception from duty to comply with decision notice or enforcement notice.

- (1) This section applies to a decision notice or enforcement notice which—
  - (a) is served on—
    - (i) a government department,
    - <sup>F111</sup>(ii) the Welsh Assembly Government, or]
    - (iii) any public authority designated for the purposes of this section by an order made by the <sup>F112</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office], and
  - (b) relates to a failure, in respect of one or more requests for information—
    - (i) to comply with section 1(1)(a) in respect of information which falls within any provision of Part II stating that the duty to confirm or deny does not arise, or
    - (ii) to comply with section 1(1)(b) in respect of exempt information.
- (2) A decision notice or enforcement notice to which this section applies shall cease to have effect if, not later than the twentieth working day following the effective date, the accountable person in relation to that authority gives the Commissioner a certificate signed by him stating that he has on reasonable grounds formed the opinion that, in respect of the request or requests concerned, there was no failure falling within subsection (1)(b).
- (3) Where the accountable person gives a certificate to the Commissioner under subsection (2) he shall as soon as practicable thereafter lay a copy of the certificate before—
  - (a) each House of Parliament,
  - (b) the Northern Ireland Assembly, in any case where the certificate relates to a decision notice or enforcement notice which has been served on a Northern Ireland department or any Northern Ireland public authority, or
  - <sup>F113</sup>(c) the National Assembly for Wales, in any case where the certificate relates to a decision notice or enforcement notice which has been served on—
    - (i) the Welsh Assembly Government,
    - (ii) the National Assembly for Wales, or
    - (iii) any Welsh public authority.]
- (4) In subsection (2) “the effective date”, in relation to a decision notice or enforcement notice, means—
  - (a) the day on which the notice was given to the public authority, or
  - (b) where an appeal under section 57 is brought, the day on which that appeal (or any further appeal arising out of it) is determined or withdrawn.
- (5) Before making an order under subsection (1)(a)(iii), the <sup>F114</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office] shall—

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- (a) if the order relates to a Welsh public authority, consult [<sup>F115</sup>the Welsh Ministers],
  - [<sup>F116</sup>(aa) if the order relates to the National Assembly for Wales, consult the Presiding Officer of that Assembly,]
  - (b) if the order relates to the Northern Ireland Assembly, consult the Presiding Officer of that Assembly, and
  - (c) if the order relates to a Northern Ireland public authority, consult the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland.
- (6) Where the accountable person gives a certificate to the Commissioner under subsection (2) in relation to a decision notice, the accountable person shall, on doing so or as soon as reasonably practicable after doing so, inform the person who is the complainant for the purposes of section 50 of the reasons for his opinion.
- (7) The accountable person is not obliged to provide information under subsection (6) if, or to the extent that, compliance with that subsection would involve the disclosure of exempt information.
- (8) In this section “the accountable person”—
- (a) in relation to a Northern Ireland department or any Northern Ireland public authority, means the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland acting jointly,
  - [<sup>F117</sup>(b) in relation the Welsh Assembly Government, the National Assembly for Wales or any Welsh public authority, means the First Minister for Wales, and]
  - (c) in relation to any other public authority, means—
    - (i) a Minister of the Crown who is a member of the Cabinet, or
    - (ii) the Attorney General, the Advocate General for Scotland or the Attorney General for Northern Ireland.
- (9) In this section “working day” has the same meaning as in section 10.

#### Textual Amendments

- F111** S. 53(1)(a)(ii) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 83(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of “the initial period” (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F112** Words in s. 53(1)(a)(iii) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(n)** (with art. 12)
- F113** S. 53(3)(c) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 83(3)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of “the initial period” (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F114** Words in s. 53(5) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(n)** (with art. 12)
- F115** Words in s. 53(5)(a) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 83(4)(a)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of “the initial period” (which ended with the

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day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))

**F116** S. 53(5)(aa) inserted by The Government of Wales Act 2006 (Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions) Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/1388), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 83(4)(b)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))

**F117** S. 53(8)(b) substituted by The Government of Wales Act 2006 (Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions) Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/1388), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 83(5)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32))

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C48** S. 53(1)(a)(iii) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by The Transfer of Functions (Information and Public Records) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/1897), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(j) (with art. 5)

**C49** S. 53(5) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by The Transfer of Functions (Information and Public Records) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/1897), arts. 1(2), **4(1)**, (2)(j) (with art. 5)

#### Commencement Information

**I16** S. 53 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 53 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make an order, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 53 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/1909, **art. 2** and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, **art. 2**

## 54 Failure to comply with notice.

- (1) If a public authority has failed to comply with—
  - (a) so much of a decision notice as requires steps to be taken,
  - (b) an information notice, or
  - (c) an enforcement notice,
 the Commissioner may certify in writing to the court that the public authority has failed to comply with that notice.
- (2) For the purposes of this section, a public authority which, in purported compliance with an information notice—
  - (a) makes a statement which it knows to be false in a material respect, or
  - (b) recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material respect,
 is to be taken to have failed to comply with the notice.
- (3) Where a failure to comply is certified under subsection (1), the court may inquire into the matter and, after hearing any witness who may be produced against or on behalf of the public authority, and after hearing any statement that may be offered in defence, deal with the authority as if it had committed a contempt of court.
- (4) In this section “the court” means the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C50** S. 54 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 (S.I. 2009/3157), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(9)}

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- C51** S. 54 excluded (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **22(7)** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C52** S. 54 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

#### Commencement Information

- I17** S. 54 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 54 not in force at Royal assent, see s. 87(3); s. 54 in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **art. 2(d)(e)**; s. 54 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), **art. 2** and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

## 55 Powers of entry and inspection.

Schedule 3 (powers of entry and inspection) has effect.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C53** S. 55 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(9)}

#### Commencement Information

- I18** S. 55 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 55 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 55 in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **art. 2(d)(f)**; s. 55 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), **art. 2** and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

## 56 No action against public authority.

- (1) This Act does not confer any right of action in civil proceedings in respect of any failure to comply with any duty imposed by or under this Act.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not affect the powers of the Commissioner under section 54.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C54** S. 56 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(7)(9)}
- C55** S. 56 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **19** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C56** S. 56 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C57** S. 56 excluded (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **22(7)** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

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## PART V

### APPEALS

#### 57 Appeal against notices served under Part IV.

- (1) Where a decision notice has been served, the complainant or the public authority may appeal to the Tribunal against the notice.
- (2) A public authority on which an information notice or an enforcement notice has been served by the Commissioner may appeal to the Tribunal against the notice.
- (3) In relation to a decision notice or enforcement notice which relates—
  - (a) to information to which section 66 applies, and
  - (b) to a matter which by virtue of subsection (3) or (4) of that section falls to be determined by the responsible authority instead of the appropriate records authority,
 subsections (1) and (2) shall have effect as if the reference to the public authority were a reference to the public authority or the responsible authority.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C58** S. 57 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(8)(9)}
- C59** S. 57 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C60** S. 57 excluded (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **22(7)** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C61** S. 57 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **19** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

#### Commencement Information

- I19** S. 57 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 57 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 57(2) in force at 30.11.2002 by [S.I. 2002/2812](#), **art. 2(g)**; s. 57(1)(3) in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/1909](#), **art. 2**; s. 57(1)(3) otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

#### 58 Determination of appeals.

- (1) If on an appeal under section 57 the Tribunal considers—
  - (a) that the notice against which the appeal is brought is not in accordance with the law, or
  - (b) to the extent that the notice involved an exercise of discretion by the Commissioner, that he ought to have exercised his discretion differently,
 the Tribunal shall allow the appeal or substitute such other notice as could have been served by the Commissioner; and in any other case the Tribunal shall dismiss the appeal.
- (2) On such an appeal, the Tribunal may review any finding of fact on which the notice in question was based.

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**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

- C62** S. 58 applied (with modifications) (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), {reg. 11(1)-(3)(9)}
- C63** S. 58 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **18** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C64** S. 58 applied (with modifications) (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **19** (with regs. 5, 11(4))
- C65** S. 58 excluded (18.7.2015) by [The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1415\)](#), regs. 1, **22(7)** (with regs. 5, 11(4))

**59 Appeals from decision of Tribunal.**

**F118** .....

**Textual Amendments**

- F118** S. 59 omitted (18.1.2010) by virtue of [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\)](#), arts. 1(1), 5(1), [Sch. 2 para. 69](#)

**60 Appeals against national security certificate.**

- (1) Where a certificate under section 23(2) or 24(3) has been issued—
  - (a) the Commissioner, or
  - (b) any applicant whose request for information is affected by the issue of the certificate,may appeal to the Tribunal against the certificate.
- (2) If on an appeal under subsection (1) relating to a certificate under section 23(2), the Tribunal finds that the information referred to in the certificate was not exempt information by virtue of section 23(1), the Tribunal may allow the appeal and quash the certificate.
- (3) If on an appeal under subsection (1) relating to a certificate under section 24(3), the Tribunal finds that, applying the principles applied by the court on an application for judicial review, the Minister did not have reasonable grounds for issuing the certificate, the Tribunal may allow the appeal and quash the certificate.
- (4) Where in any proceedings under this Act it is claimed by a public authority that a certificate under section 24(3) which identifies the information to which it applies by means of a general description applies to particular information, any other party to the proceedings may appeal to the Tribunal on the ground that the certificate does not apply to the information in question and, subject to any determination under subsection (5), the certificate shall be conclusively presumed so to apply.
- (5) On any appeal under subsection (4), the Tribunal may determine that the certificate does not so apply.

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### Commencement Information

**I20** S. 60 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 60 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 60 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2002/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

## [<sup>F119</sup>61 Appeal proceedings

- (1) Tribunal Procedure Rules may make provision for regulating the exercise of rights of appeal conferred by sections 57(1) and (2) and 60(1) and (4).
- (2) In relation to appeals under those provisions, Tribunal Procedure Rules may make provision about—
  - (a) securing the production of material used for the processing of personal data, and
  - (b) the inspection, examination, operation and testing of equipment or material used in connection with the processing of personal data.
- (3) Subsection (4) applies where—
  - (a) a person does something, or fails to do something, in relation to proceedings before the First-tier Tribunal on an appeal under those provisions, and
  - (b) if those proceedings were proceedings before a court having power to commit for contempt, the act or omission would constitute contempt of court.
- (4) The First-tier Tribunal may certify the offence to the Upper Tribunal.
- (5) Where an offence is certified under subsection (4), the Upper Tribunal may—
  - (a) inquire into the matter, and
  - (b) deal with the person charged with the offence in any manner in which it could deal with the person if the offence had been committed in relation to the Upper Tribunal.
- (6) Before exercising the power under subsection (5)(b), the Upper Tribunal must—
  - (a) hear any witness who may be produced against or on behalf of the person charged with the offence, and
  - (b) hear any statement that may be offered in defence.
- (7) In this section, “personal data” and “processing” have the same meaning as in Parts 5 to 7 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3(2), (4) and (14) of that Act.)

### Textual Amendments

**F119** S. 61 substituted (23.5.2018 for specified purposes, 25.5.2018 in so far as not already in force) by Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), s. 212(1)(2)(f), Sch. 19 para. 60 (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 53); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

## PART VI

### HISTORICAL RECORDS AND RECORDS IN PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OR PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C66** Pt. VI modified (1.1.2013) by [The Freedom of Information \(Definition of Historical Records\) \(Transitional and Saving Provisions\) Order 2012 \(S.I. 2012/3029\)](#), arts. 1(1), 2, **Sch.**

## 62 Interpretation of Part VI.

- (1) For the purposes of this Part, a record becomes a “historical record” at the end of the period of [<sup>F120</sup>twenty years] beginning with the year following that in which it was created.
- (2) Where records created at different dates are for administrative purposes kept together in one file or other assembly, all the records in that file or other assembly are to be treated for the purposes of this Part as having been created when the latest of those records was created.
- [<sup>F121</sup>(2A) Until the end of the period of 10 years beginning with the commencement of paragraph 4 of Schedule 7 to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, subsection (1) has effect subject to any order made under section 46(2) of that Act.]
- (3) In this Part “year” means a calendar year.

#### Textual Amendments

- F120** Words in s. 62(1) substituted (1.1.2013) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 52, **Sch. 7 para. 4(2)**; S.I. 2012/3001, art. 3(1)(b)
- F121** S. 62(2A) inserted (1.1.2013) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 52, **Sch. 7 para. 4(3)**; S.I. 2012/3001, art. 3(1)(b)

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C67** S. 62(1): saving for the effect of 2010 c. 25, Sch. 7 para. 4(2) (1.1.2013) by [The Freedom of Information \(Definition of Historical Records\) \(Transitional and Saving Provisions\) Order 2012 \(S.I. 2012/3029\)](#), arts. 1(1), **3**

#### Commencement Information

**I21** S. 62 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 62 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 62 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2002/1909](#), **art. 2** and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), **art. 2**

## 63 Removal of exemptions: historical records generally.

- (1) Information contained in a historical record cannot be exempt information by virtue of section <sup>F122</sup>... 30(1), 32, 33, 35, [<sup>F123</sup>36, 37(1)(a), 42 or 43 [<sup>F123</sup>or 42]].
- (2) Compliance with section 1(1)(a) in relation to a historical record is not to be taken to be capable of having any of the effects referred to in section <sup>F124</sup>... 33(3), [<sup>F125</sup>or 42(2)].

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- [<sup>F126</sup>(2A) Information contained in a historical record cannot be exempt information by virtue of section 36 except—
- (a) in a case falling within subsection (2)(a)(ii) of that section, or
  - (b) in a case falling within subsection (2)(c) of that section where the prejudice or likely prejudice relates to the effective conduct of public affairs in Northern Ireland.
- (2B) Compliance with section 1(1)(a) in relation to a historical record is not to be taken to have any of the effects referred to in subsection (3) of section 36, except where the effect—
- (a) falls within subsection (2)(a)(ii) of that section, or
  - (b) falls within subsection (2)(c) of that section and relates to the effective conduct of public affairs in Northern Ireland.
- (2C) Information cannot be exempt information—
- (a) by virtue of section 28 or 43, or
  - (b) by virtue of section 36 in the excepted cases mentioned in subsection (2A), after the end of the period of thirty years beginning with the year following that in which the record containing the information was created.
- (2D) Compliance with section 1(1)(a) in relation to any record is not to be taken, at any time after the end of the period of thirty years beginning with the year following that in which the record was created, to be capable—
- (a) of prejudicing any of the matters referred to in section 28(1) or 43(2), or
  - (b) of having any of the effects referred to in section 36(3) in the excepted cases mentioned in subsection (2B).
- (2E) Information cannot be exempt information by virtue of any of paragraphs (a) to (ad) of section 37(1) after whichever is the later of—
- (a) the end of the period of five years beginning with the date of the relevant death, and
  - (b) the end of the period of twenty years beginning with the date on which the record containing the information was created.
- (2F) In subsection (2E)(a) “ the relevant death ” means—
- (a) for the purposes of any of paragraphs (a) to (ac) of section 37(1), the death of the person referred to in the paragraph concerned, or
  - (b) for the purposes of section 37(1)(ad), the death of the Sovereign reigning when the record containing the information was created.]
- (3) Information cannot be exempt information by virtue of section 37(1)(b) after the end of the period of sixty years beginning with the year following that in which the record containing the information was created.
- (4) Information cannot be exempt information by virtue of section 31 after the end of the period of one hundred years beginning with the year following that in which the record containing the information was created.
- (5) Compliance with section 1(1)(a) in relation to any record is not to be taken, at any time after the end of the period of one hundred years beginning with the year following that in which the record was created, to be capable of prejudicing any of the matters referred to in section 31(1).

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

### Textual Amendments

- F122** Word in s. 63(1) omitted (1.1.2013) by virtue of [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 52, [Sch. 7 para. 5\(2\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2012/3001, art. 3(1)(b)
- F123** Words in s. 63(1) substituted (19.1.2011 but only in so far as the words "37(1)(a)," are omitted and otherwise prosp.) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 46(1), 52(2), [Sch. 7 para. 5\(2\)\(b\)](#); S.I. 2011/46, [art. 3\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (with art. 4)
- F124** Word in s. 63(2) omitted (1.1.2013) by virtue of [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 52, [Sch. 7 para. 5\(3\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2012/3001, art. 3(1)(b)
- F125** Words in s. 63(2) substituted (1.1.2013) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 52, [Sch. 7 para. 5\(3\)\(b\)](#); S.I. 2012/3001, art. 3(1)(b)
- F126** S. 63(2A)-(2F) inserted (19.1.2011 but only to the extent of inserting s. 63(2E)(2F) and otherwise prosp.) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 46(1), 52(2), [Sch. 7 para. 5\(4\)](#); S.I. 2011/46, [art. 3\(b\)\(iii\)](#) (with art. 4)

## 64 Removal of exemptions: historical records in public record offices.

- (1) Information contained in a historical record in the Public Record Office or the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland cannot be exempt information by virtue of section 21 or 22.
- (2) In relation to any information falling within section 23(1) which is contained in a historical record in the Public Record Office or the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, section 2(3) shall have effect with the omission of the reference to section 23.

## 65 Decisions as to refusal of discretionary disclosure of historical records.

- (1) Before refusing a request for information relating to information which is contained in a historical record and is exempt information only by virtue of a provision not specified in section 2(3), a public authority shall—
  - (a) if the historical record is a public record within the meaning of the <sup>M18</sup>Public Records Act 1958, consult the [<sup>F127</sup>Secretary of State], or
  - (b) if the historical record is a public record to which the <sup>M19</sup>Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 applies, consult the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister.
- (2) This section does not apply to information to which section 66 applies.

### Textual Amendments

- F127** Words in s. 65(1)(a) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. para. 2\(5\)\(d\)](#)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C68** S. 65(1)(a) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), [6\(1\)\(b\)](#), [\(3\)\(b\)](#) (with art. 7)

### Marginal Citations

- M18** 1958 c. 51.  
**M19** 1923 c. 20 (N.I.).

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

## 66 Decisions relating to certain transferred public records.

- (1) This section applies to any information which is (or, if it existed, would be) contained in a transferred public record, other than information which the responsible authority has designated as open information for the purposes of this section.
- (2) Before determining whether—
  - (a) information to which this section applies falls within any provision of Part II relating to the duty to confirm or deny, or
  - (b) information to which this section applies is exempt information,
 the appropriate records authority shall consult the responsible authority.
- (3) Where information to which this section applies falls within a provision of Part II relating to the duty to confirm or deny but does not fall within any of the provisions of that Part relating to that duty which are specified in subsection (3) of section 2, any question as to the application of subsection (1)(b) of that section is to be determined by the responsible authority instead of the appropriate records authority.
- (4) Where any information to which this section applies is exempt information only by virtue of any provision of Part II not specified in subsection (3) of section 2, any question as to the application of subsection (2)(b) of that section is to be determined by the responsible authority instead of the appropriate records authority.
- (5) Before making by virtue of subsection (3) or (4) any determination that subsection (1) (b) or (2)(b) of section 2 applies, the responsible authority shall consult—
  - (a) where the transferred public record is a public record within the meaning of the <sup>M20</sup>Public Records Act 1958, the [<sup>F128</sup>Secretary of State], and
  - (b) where the transferred public record is a public record to which the <sup>M21</sup>Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 applies, the appropriate Northern Ireland Minister.
- (6) Where the responsible authority in relation to information to which this section applies is not (apart from this subsection) a public authority, it shall be treated as being a public authority for the purposes of Parts III, IV and V of this Act so far as relating to—
  - (a) the duty imposed by section 15(3), and
  - (b) the imposition of any requirement to furnish information relating to compliance with Part I in connection with the information to which this section applies.

### Textual Amendments

**F128** Words in s. 66(5)(a) substituted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(5)(e)**

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

**C69** S. 66(5)(a) functions transferred (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **6(1)(b)**, (3)(c) (with art. 7)

### Marginal Citations

**M20** 1958 c. 51.

**M21** 1923 c. 20 (N.I.).

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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## 67 Amendments of public records legislation.

Schedule 5 (which amends the <sup>M22</sup>Public Records Act 1958 and the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923) has effect.

### Commencement Information

**I22** S. 67 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 67 in force for certain purposes at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(j)(3); s. 67 in force for certain further purposes at 30.11.2002 by S.I. 2002/2812, art. 2(j); s. 67 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

### Marginal Citations

**M22** 1958 c. 51.

## PART VII

### AMENDMENTS OF DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

#### *Amendments relating to personal information held by public authorities*

## 68 Extension of meaning of “data”.

- (1) Section 1 of the <sup>M23</sup>Data Protection Act 1998 (basic interpretative provisions) is amended in accordance with subsections (2) and (3).
- (2) In subsection (1)—
  - (a) in the definition of “data”, the word “or” at the end of paragraph (c) is omitted and after paragraph (d) there is inserted “or
    - (e) is recorded information held by a public authority and does not fall within any of paragraphs (a) to (d);”,and
  - (b) after the definition of “processing” there is inserted—

““public authority” has the same meaning as in the Freedom of Information Act 2000;”.
- (3) After subsection (4) there is inserted—
  - (5) In paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in subsection (1), the reference to information “held” by a public authority shall be construed in accordance with section 3(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
  - (6) Where section 7 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 prevents Parts I to V of that Act from applying to certain information held by a public authority, that information is not to be treated for the purposes of paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in subsection (1) as held by a public authority.”
- (4) In section 56 of that Act (prohibition of requirement as to production of certain records), after subsection (6) there is inserted—

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“(6A) A record is not a relevant record to the extent that it relates, or is to relate, only to personal data falling within paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in section 1(1).”

(5) In the Table in section 71 of that Act (index of defined expressions) after the entry relating to processing there is inserted—

“public authority

section 1(1).”.

#### Commencement Information

**I23** S. 68 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 68 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 68 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2002/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

#### Marginal Citations

**M23** 1998 c. 29.

## 69 Right of access to unstructured personal data held by public authorities.

(1) In section 7(1) of the <sup>M24</sup>Data Protection Act 1998 (right of access to personal data), for “sections 8 and 9” there is substituted “ sections 8, 9 and 9A ”.

<sup>F129</sup>(2) After section 9 of that Act there is inserted—

### “9A Unstructured personal data held by public authorities.

- (1) In this section “unstructured personal data” means any personal data falling within paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in section 1(1), other than information which is recorded as part of, or with the intention that it should form part of, any set of information relating to individuals to the extent that the set is structured by reference to individuals or by reference to criteria relating to individuals.
- (2) A public authority is not obliged to comply with subsection (1) of section 7 in relation to any unstructured personal data unless the request under that section contains a description of the data.
- (3) Even if the data are described by the data subject in his request, a public authority is not obliged to comply with subsection (1) of section 7 in relation to unstructured personal data if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request so far as relating to those data would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (4) Subsection (3) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 7(1) in relation to the unstructured personal data unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone in relation to those data would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (5) In subsections (3) and (4) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State by regulations, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

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- (6) Any estimate for the purposes of this section must be made in accordance with regulations under section 12(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.”
- (3) In section 67(5) of that Act (statutory instruments subject to negative resolution procedure), in paragraph (c), for “or 9(3)” there is substituted “, 9(3) or 9A(5)”.

#### Textual Amendments

**F129** By The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 (S.I. 2003/1887), art. 9, Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(b), it is provided (19.8.2003) that in s. 69(2), in the inserted s. 9A of the Data Protection Act 1998, in each place for the words "Lord Chancellor" there be substituted the words "Secretary of State"

#### Commencement Information

**I24** S. 69 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 69 in force at Royal Assent to the extent that it confers power to make regulations, see s. 87(1)(m)(3); s. 69 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2002/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

#### Marginal Citations

**M24** 1998 c. 29.

## 70 Exemptions applicable to certain manual data held by public authorities.

- (1) After section 33 of the <sup>M25</sup>Data Protection Act 1998 there is inserted—

### “33A Manual data held by public authorities.

- (1) Personal data falling within paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in section 1(1) are exempt from—
- the first, second, third, fifth, seventh and eighth data protection principles,
  - the sixth data protection principle except so far as it relates to the rights conferred on data subjects by sections 7 and 14,
  - sections 10 to 12,
  - section 13, except so far as it relates to damage caused by a contravention of section 7 or of the fourth data protection principle and to any distress which is also suffered by reason of that contravention,
  - Part III, and
  - section 55.
- (2) Personal data which fall within paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in section 1(1) and relate to appointments or removals, pay, discipline, superannuation or other personnel matters, in relation to—
- service in any of the armed forces of the Crown,
  - service in any office or employment under the Crown or under any public authority, or
  - service in any office or employment, or under any contract for services, in respect of which power to take action, or to determine or approve the action taken, in such matters is vested in Her Majesty, any Minister of the Crown, the National Assembly for Wales, any

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Northern Ireland Minister (within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act 2000) or any public authority,  
 are also exempt from the remaining data protection principles and the remaining provisions of Part II.”

(2) In section 55 of that Act (unlawful obtaining etc. of personal data) in subsection (8) after “section 28” there is inserted “ or 33A ”.

(3) In Part III of Schedule 8 to that Act (exemptions available after 23rd October 2001 but before 24th October 2007) after paragraph 14 there is inserted—

“14A (1) This paragraph applies to personal data which fall within paragraph (e) of the definition of “data” in section 1(1) and do not fall within paragraph 14(1)(a), but does not apply to eligible manual data to which the exemption in paragraph 16 applies.

(2) During the second transitional period, data to which this paragraph applies are exempt from—

- (a) the fourth data protection principle, and
- (b) section 14(1) to (3).”

(4) In Schedule 13 to that Act (modifications of Act having effect before 24th October 2007) in subsection (4)(b) of section 12A to that Act as set out in paragraph 1, after “paragraph 14” there is inserted “ or 14A ”.

#### Commencement Information

**I25** S. 70 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 70 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 70 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2002/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

#### Marginal Citations

**M25** 1998 c. 29.

### <sup>F130</sup>71 Particulars registrable under Part III of Data Protection Act 1998.

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#### Textual Amendments

**F130** S. 71 repealed (25.5.2018) by Digital Economy Act 2017 (c. 30), ss. 111(9)(a), 118(6); S.I. 2018/624, reg. 2

### 72 Availability under Act disregarded for purpose of exemption.

In section 34 of the <sup>M26</sup>Data Protection Act 1998 (information available to the public by or under enactment), after the word “enactment” there is inserted “ other than an enactment contained in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ”.

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#### Marginal Citations

M26 1998 c. 29.

#### Other amendments

### 73 Further amendments of Data Protection Act 1998.

Schedule 6 (which contains further amendments of the Data Protection Act 1998) has effect.

#### Commencement Information

**I26** S. 73 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 73 in force for certain purposes at Royal Assent, see s. 87(1)(k) (3); s. 73 in force for certain further purposes at 14.5.2001 by S.I. 2001/1637, art. 2(d); s. 73 in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/1909, art. 2 and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by S.I. 2004/3122, art. 2

## PART VIII

### MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

### 74 Power to make provision relating to environmental information.

- (1) In this section “the Aarhus Convention” means the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters signed at Aarhus on 25th June 1998.
- (2) For the purposes of this section “the information provisions” of the Aarhus Convention are Article 4, together with Articles 3 and 9 so far as relating to that Article.
- (3) The Secretary of State may by regulations make such provision as he considers appropriate—
  - (a) for the purpose of implementing the information provisions of the Aarhus Convention or any amendment of those provisions made in accordance with Article 14 of the Convention, and
  - (b) for the purpose of dealing with matters arising out of or related to the implementation of those provisions or of any such amendment.
- (4) Regulations under subsection (3) may in particular—
  - (a) enable charges to be made for making information available in accordance with the regulations,
  - (b) provide that any obligation imposed by the regulations in relation to the disclosure of information is to have effect notwithstanding any enactment or rule of law,
  - (c) make provision for the issue by the Secretary of State of a code of practice,
  - (d) provide for sections 47 and 48 to apply in relation to such a code with such modifications as may be specified,

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- (e) provide for any of the provisions of Parts IV and V to apply, with such modifications as may be specified in the regulations, in relation to compliance with any requirement of the regulations, and
  - (f) contain such transitional or consequential provision (including provision modifying any enactment) as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- (5) This section has effect subject to section 80.

## 75 Power to amend or repeal enactments prohibiting disclosure of information.

- (1) If, with respect to any enactment which prohibits the disclosure of information held by a public authority, it appears to the [F131Secretary of State][F132or the [F133Minister for the Cabinet Office]] that by virtue of section 44(1)(a) the enactment is capable of preventing the disclosure of information under section 1, he may by order repeal or amend the enactment for the purpose of removing or relaxing the prohibition.
- (2) In subsection (1)—
- “enactment” means—
    - (a) any enactment contained in an Act passed before or in the same Session as this Act, or
    - (b) any enactment contained in Northern Ireland legislation or subordinate legislation passed or made before the passing of this Act;
  - “information” includes unrecorded information.
- (3) An order under this section may do all or any of the following—
- (a) make such modifications of enactments as, in the opinion of the [F131Secretary of State][F134or the [F135Minister for the Cabinet Office]], are consequential upon, or incidental to, the amendment or repeal of the enactment containing the prohibition;
  - (b) contain such transitional provisions and savings as appear to the [F131Secretary of State][F134or the [F135Minister for the Cabinet Office]] to be appropriate;
  - (c) make different provision for different cases.

### Textual Amendments

- F131** Words in s. 75 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(c)**
- F132** Words in s. 75(1) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(d)**
- F133** Words in s. 75(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(o)** (with art. 12)
- F134** Words in s. 75(3) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(d)**
- F135** Words in s. 75(3) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(o)** (with art. 12)

### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C70** S. 75(1) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(d) (with art. 5)

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

**76 Disclosure of information between Commissioner and ombudsmen.**

- (1) The Commissioner may disclose to a person specified in the first column of the Table below any information obtained by, or furnished to, the Commissioner under or for the purposes of this Act or [<sup>F136</sup>the data protection legislation] if it appears to the Commissioner that the information relates to a matter which could be the subject of an investigation by that person under the enactment specified in relation to that person in the second column of that Table.

TABLE

<i>Ombudsman</i>	<i>Enactment</i>
The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.	The Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (c. 13).
The Health Service Commissioner for England. F137	The Health Service Commissioners Act 1993 (c. 46). F137
.....	.....
[ <sup>F138</sup> The Health Service Commissioner for Scotland.]	[ <sup>F138</sup> The Health Service Commissioners Act 1993 (c. 46).]
A Local Commissioner as defined by section 23(3) of the Local Government Act 1974. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	Part III [ <sup>F139</sup> or Part 3A] of the Local Government Act 1974 (c. 7).
[ <sup>F140</sup> The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 (asp 11)]
[ <sup>F141</sup> The Commissioner for Local Administration in Scotland.]	[ <sup>F141</sup> Part II of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 (c. 30).]
[ <sup>F141</sup> The Scottish Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.]	[ <sup>F141</sup> The Scotland Act 1998 (Transitory and Transitional Provisions)(Complaints of Maladministration) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/1351).]
[ <sup>F142</sup> The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales F144	Part 2 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005 [ <sup>F143</sup> or Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019]] F144
.....	.....
The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints.	The Commissioner for Complaints (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (S.I. 1996/1297 (N.I. 7)).
The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.	The Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (S.I. 1996/1298 (N.I. 8)).
[ <sup>F145</sup> The Commissioner for Older People in Wales	The Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006]

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

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- (2) Schedule 7 (which contains amendments relating to information disclosed to ombudsmen under subsection (1) and to the disclosure of information by ombudsmen to the Commissioner) has effect.

#### Textual Amendments

- F136** Words in s. 76(1) substituted (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 61** (with ss. 117, 209, 210); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F137** S. 76(1): entry relating to Health Service Commissioner for Wales repealed (1.4.2006) by [Public Services Ombudsman \(Wales\) Act 2005 \(c. 10\)](#), ss. 39, 40, Sch. 6 para. 71(a), **Sch. 7**; S.I. 2005/2800, **art. 5(1)** (with art. 5(2), Sch. 2)
- F138** S. 76(1): entry repealed (S.) (23.10.2002) by [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 \(asp 11\)](#), s. 25, **Sch. 6 para. 23(2)(a)**; S.S.I. 2002/467, **art. 2**
- F139** Words in s. 76 inserted (1.10.2010) by [Health Act 2009 \(c. 21\)](#), ss. 35, 40, **Sch. 5 para. 14**; S.I. 2010/1863, **art. 2**
- F140** S. 76(1): entry inserted (S.) (23.10.2002) by [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 \(asp 11\)](#), s. 25, **Sch. 6 para. 23(2)(b)**; S.S.I. 2002/467, **art. 2**
- F141** S. 76(1): entry repealed (S.) (23.10.2002) by [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 \(asp 11\)](#), s. 25, **Sch. 6 para. 23(2)(a)**; S.S.I. 2002/467, **art. 2**
- F142** S. 76(1): entry substituted (1.4.2006) by [Public Services Ombudsman \(Wales\) Act 2005 \(c. 10\)](#), ss. 39(1), 40, **Sch. 6 para. 71(b)**; S.I. 2005/2800, **art. 5(1)** (with art. 5(2), Sch. 2)
- F143** Words in s. 76 inserted (E.W.) (23.7.2019) by [Public Services Ombudsman \(Wales\) Act 2019 \(anaw 3\)](#), s. 77(1), **Sch. 5 para. 18**; S.I. 2019/1096, reg. 2
- F144** S. 76(1): entry relating to Social Housing Ombudsman for Wales repealed (1.4.2006) by [Public Services Ombudsman \(Wales\) Act 2005 \(c. 10\)](#), ss. 39, 40, Sch. 6 para. 71(a), **Sch. 7**; S.I. 2005/2800, **art. 5(1)** (with art. 5(2), Sch. 2)
- F145** S. 76(1): entry inserted (14.10.2006 for W.) by [Commissioner for Older People \(Wales\) Act 2006 \(c. 30\)](#), ss. 1(2), 23, **Sch. 1 para. 21(a)**; S.I. 2006/2699, **art. 2**

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C71** S. 76(1) applied (31.12.2009) by [The INSPIRE Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/3157\)](#), **reg. 11(11)**

#### [<sup>F146</sup>76A Disclosure between Commissioner and Scottish Information Commissioner

The Commissioner may disclose to the Scottish Information Commissioner any information obtained or furnished as mentioned in section 76(1) of this Act if it appears to the Commissioner that the information is of the same type that could be obtained by, or furnished to, the Scottish Information Commissioner under or for the purposes of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F146** S. 76A inserted (1.1.2005) by [The Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(Consequential Modifications\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3089\)](#), **art. 3(2)**

#### [<sup>F147</sup>76B Disclosure of information to Tribunal

- (1) No enactment or rule of law prohibiting or restricting the disclosure of information precludes a person from providing the First-tier Tribunal or the Upper Tribunal with

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information necessary for the discharge of their functions in connection with appeals under section 60 of this Act.

- (2) But this section does not authorise the making of a disclosure which is prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.
- (3) Until the repeal of Part 1 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 by paragraphs 45 and 54 of Schedule 10 to the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 is fully in force, subsection (2) has effect as if it included a reference to that Part.]

#### Textual Amendments

**F147** S. 76B inserted (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 62](#) (with ss. 117, 209, 210); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

## 77 Offence of altering etc. records with intent to prevent disclosure.

- (1) Where—
  - (a) a request for information has been made to a public authority, and
  - (b) under section 1 of this Act <sup>F148</sup>... the applicant would have been entitled (subject to payment of any fee) to communication of any information in accordance with that section,any person to whom this subsection applies is guilty of an offence if he alters, defaces, blocks, erases, destroys or conceals any record held by the public authority, with the intention of preventing the disclosure by that authority of all, or any part, of the information to the communication of which the applicant would have been entitled.
- (2) Subsection (1) applies to the public authority and to any person who is employed by, is an officer of, or is subject to the direction of, the public authority.
- (3) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.
- (4) No proceedings for an offence under this section shall be instituted—
  - (a) in England or Wales, except by the Commissioner or by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
  - (b) in Northern Ireland, except by the Commissioner or by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland.

#### Textual Amendments

**F148** Words in s. 77(1)(b) omitted (25.5.2018) by virtue of [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), [Sch. 19 para. 63](#) (with ss. 117, 209, 210, Sch. 20 para. 55); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)

#### Commencement Information

**I27** S. 77 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 77 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 87(3); s. 77 in force for certain purposes at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2002/1909](#), [art. 2](#) and otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), [art. 2](#)

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## 78 Saving for existing powers.

Nothing in this Act is to be taken to limit the powers of a public authority to disclose information held by it.

## 79 Defamation.

Where any information communicated by a public authority to a person (“the applicant”) under section 1 was supplied to the public authority by a third person, the publication to the applicant of any defamatory matter contained in the information shall be privileged unless the publication is shown to have been made with malice.

## 80 Scotland.

(1) No order may be made under section 4(1) or 5 in relation to any of the bodies specified in subsection (2); and the power conferred by section 74(3) does not include power to make provision in relation to information held by any of those bodies.

(2) The bodies referred to in subsection (1) are—

- (a) the Scottish Parliament,
- (b) any part of the Scottish Administration,
- (c) the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, or
- (d) any Scottish public authority with mixed functions or no reserved functions (within the meaning of the <sup>M27</sup>Scotland Act 1998).

[<sup>F149</sup>(3) Section 50 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Copyright and Rights in Databases Regulations 1997 apply in relation to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 as they apply in relation to this Act.]

### Textual Amendments

**F149** S. 80(3) added (1.1.2005) by [The Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(Consequential Modifications\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/3089\)](#), **art. 3(3)**

### Marginal Citations

**M27** 1998 c. 46.

## <sup>F150</sup>80A Information held by Northern Ireland bodies

.....

### Textual Amendments

**F150** S. 80A repealed (1.7.2012) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), ss. 104(1)(a), 120, **Sch. 10 Pt. 7** (with s. 97); [S.I. 2012/1205](#), **art. 3(x)(cc)**

## 81 Application to government departments, etc.

(1) For the purposes of this Act each government department is to be treated as a person separate from any other government department.

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- (2) Subsection (1) does not enable—
- (a) a government department which is not a Northern Ireland department to claim for the purposes of section 41(1)(b) that the disclosure of any information by it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by any other government department (not being a Northern Ireland department), or
  - (b) a Northern Ireland department to claim for those purposes that the disclosure of information by it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by any other Northern Ireland department.
- (3) A government department [<sup>F151</sup>or the Welsh Assembly Government] is not liable to prosecution under this Act, but section 77 and paragraph 12 of Schedule 3 apply to a person in the public service of the Crown as they apply to any other person.
- (4) The provisions specified in subsection (3) also apply to a person acting on behalf of either House of Parliament or on behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly [<sup>F152</sup>or the National Assembly for Wales] as they apply to any other person.

#### Textual Amendments

**F151** Words in s. 81(3) inserted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 84(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

**F152** Words in s. 81(4) inserted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 84(3)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

## 82 Orders and regulations.

- (1) Any power of the <sup>F153</sup> . . . Secretary of State [<sup>F154</sup>or the [<sup>F155</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] to make an order or regulations under this Act shall be exercisable by statutory instrument.
- (2) A statutory instrument containing (whether alone or with other provisions)—
- (a) an order under section 5, 7(3) or (8), 53(1)(a)(iii) or 75, or
  - (b) regulations under section 10(4) or 74(3),
- shall not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.
- (3) A statutory instrument which contains (whether alone or with other provisions)—
- (a) an order under section 4(1) [<sup>F156</sup>or 47(4B)], or
  - (b) regulations under any provision of this Act not specified in subsection (2)(b),
- and which is not subject to the requirement in subsection (2) that a draft of the instrument be laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament, shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
- (4) An order under section 4(5) shall be laid before Parliament after being made.

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- (5) If a draft of an order under section 5 or 7(8) would, apart from this subsection, be treated for the purposes of the Standing Orders of either House of Parliament as a hybrid instrument, it shall proceed in that House as if it were not such an instrument.

#### Textual Amendments

- F153** Words in s. 82(1) repealed (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(3)**
- F154** Words in s. 82(1) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(e)**
- F155** Words in s. 82(1) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(p)** (with art. 12)
- F156** Words in s. 82(3)(a) inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 107(4)**, 120 (with s. 97); [S.I. 2013/1906](#), art. 3(d)

### 83 Meaning of “Welsh public authority”.

- (1) In this Act “Welsh public authority” means—
- (a) any public authority which is listed in Part II, III, IV or VI of Schedule 1 and whose functions are exercisable only or mainly in or as regards Wales, other than an excluded authority, or
  - <sup>F157</sup>(b) any public authority which is—
    - (i) a subsidiary of the Welsh Ministers (as defined by section 134(4) of the Government of Wales Act 2006), or
    - (ii) a subsidiary of the Assembly Commission (as defined by section 139(4) of that Act).]
- (2) In paragraph (a) of subsection (1) “excluded authority” means a public authority which is designated by the [<sup>F158</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F159</sup>or the [<sup>F160</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] by order as an excluded authority for the purposes of that paragraph.
- (3) Before making an order under subsection (2), the [<sup>F158</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F161</sup>or the [<sup>F162</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] shall consult [<sup>F163</sup>the First Minister for Wales].

#### Textual Amendments

- F157** S. 83(1)(b) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 85(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of “the initial period” (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F158** Words in s. 83 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), art. 9, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(c)**
- F159** Words in s. 83(2) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(f)**
- F160** Words in s. 83(2) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(q)** (with art. 12)
- F161** Words in s. 83(3) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. para. 2(2)(f)**
- F162** Words in s. 83(3) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(2)(q)** (with art. 12)

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**F163** Words in s. 83(3) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 85(3)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

**C72** S. 83(2)(3) functions made exercisable concurrently (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\)](#), arts. 1(2), **3(1)**, (2)(e) (with art. 5)

**84 Interpretation.**

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

“applicant”, in relation to a request for information, means the person who made the request;

“appropriate Northern Ireland Minister” means the Northern Ireland Minister in charge of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland;

“appropriate records authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, has the meaning given by section 15(5);

“body” includes an unincorporated association;

<sup>F164</sup> ...

“the Commissioner” means the Information Commissioner;

[<sup>F165</sup>“the data protection legislation” has the same meaning as in the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3 of that Act);]

[<sup>F166</sup>“dataset” has the meaning given by section 11(5); ]

“decision notice” has the meaning given by section 50;

“the duty to confirm or deny” has the meaning given by section 1(6);

“enactment” includes an enactment contained in Northern Ireland legislation;

“enforcement notice” has the meaning given by section 52;

<sup>F167</sup> .....

“exempt information” means information which is exempt information by virtue of any provision of Part II;

“fees notice” has the meaning given by section 9(1);

“government department” includes a Northern Ireland department <sup>F168</sup> . . . and any other body or authority exercising statutory functions on behalf of the Crown, but does not include—

(a) any of the bodies specified in section 80(2),

(b) the Security Service, the Secret Intelligence Service or the Government Communications Headquarters, <sup>F169</sup> ...

(ba) [<sup>F170</sup>the National Crime Agency, or]

(c) [<sup>F171</sup>the Welsh Assembly Government]

“information” (subject to sections 51(8) and 75(2)) means information recorded in any form;

“information notice” has the meaning given by section 51;

“Minister of the Crown” has the same meaning as in the Ministers of the <sup>M28</sup> Crown Act 1975;

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“Northern Ireland Minister” includes the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland;

“Northern Ireland public authority” means any public authority, other than the Northern Ireland Assembly or a Northern Ireland department, whose functions are exercisable only or mainly in or as regards Northern Ireland and relate only or mainly to transferred matters;

“prescribed” means prescribed by regulations made by the [<sup>F172</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office];

“public authority” has the meaning given by section 3(1);

“public record” means a public record within the meaning of the <sup>M29</sup>Public Records Act 1958 or a public record to which the <sup>M30</sup>Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 applies;

“publication scheme” has the meaning given by section 19;

“request for information” has the meaning given by section 8;

“responsible authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, has the meaning given by section 15(5);

“the special forces” means those units of the armed forces of the Crown the maintenance of whose capabilities is the responsibility of the Director of Special Forces or which are for the time being subject to the operational command of that Director;

“subordinate legislation” has the meaning given by subsection (1) of section 21 of the <sup>M31</sup>Interpretation Act 1978, except that the definition of that term in that subsection shall have effect as if “Act” included Northern Ireland legislation;

“transferred matter”, in relation to Northern Ireland, has the meaning given by section 4(1) of the <sup>M32</sup>Northern Ireland Act 1998;

“transferred public record” has the meaning given by section 15(4);

[<sup>F173</sup>“the Tribunal”, in relation to any appeal under this Act, means—

- (a) the Upper Tribunal, in any case where it is determined by or under Tribunal Procedure Rules that the Upper Tribunal is to hear the appeal; or
- (b) the First-tier Tribunal, in any other case;]

“Welsh public authority” has the meaning given by section 83.

### Textual Amendments

- F164** Words in s. 84 omitted (9.11.2016) by virtue of [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 14(3)** (with art. 12)
- F165** Words in s. 84 inserted (25.5.2018) by [Data Protection Act 2018 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 212(1), **Sch. 19 para. 64** (with ss. 117, 209, 210); S.I. 2018/625, reg. 2(1)(g)
- F166** Words in s. 84 inserted (1.9.2013) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), **ss. 102(6)**, 120 (with s. 97); S.I. 2013/1906, art. 3(a)
- F167** S. 84: definition of "executive committee" omitted by virtue of [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\)](#), art. 3, **Sch. 1 para. 86(2)** (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see ss. 46, 161(5) of [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F168** Words in s. 84 omitted (N.I.) (12.4.2010) by virtue of [The Northern Ireland \(Abolition and Transfer of Functions\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2010 \(S.R. 2010/133\)](#), art. 4, **Sch. para. 7** (with transitional provision in art. 5)

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- F169** Word in s. 84 omitted (27.5.2013) by virtue of [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\), s. 61\(2\), Sch. 8 para. 103](#); [S.I. 2013/1042, art. 3\(l\)](#)
- F170** Words in s. 84 inserted (27.5.2013) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\), s. 61\(2\), Sch. 8 para. 103](#); [S.I. 2013/1042, art. 3\(l\)](#)
- F171** S. 84: in definition of "government department" para. (c) substituted by [The Government of Wales Act 2006 \(Consequential Modifications and Transitional Provisions\) Order 2007 \(S.I. 2007/1388\), art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 86\(3\)](#) (the amendment coming into force immediately after the end of "the initial period" (which ended with the day of the first appointment of a First Minister on 25.5.2007) in accordance with art. 1(2)(3) of the amending S.I. and see [ss. 46, 161\(5\) of Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#))
- F172** Words in s. 84 substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 14\(2\)\(r\)](#) (with art. 12)
- F173** S. 84: definition of "the Tribunal" substituted (18.1.2010) by [The Transfer of Tribunal Functions Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/22\), arts. 1\(1\), 5\(1\), Sch. 2 para. 71](#)

#### Marginal Citations

- M28** 1975 c. 26.  
**M29** 1958 c. 51.  
**M30** 1923 c. 20 (N.I.).  
**M31** 1978 c. 30.  
**M32** 1998 c. 47.

## 85 Expenses.

There shall be paid out of money provided by Parliament—

- (a) any increase attributable to this Act in the expenses of the [<sup>F174</sup>Secretary of State] in respect of the Commissioner, the Tribunal or the members of the Tribunal,
- (b) any administrative expenses of the [<sup>F174</sup>Secretary of State][<sup>F175</sup>or the [<sup>F176</sup>Minister for the Cabinet Office]] attributable to this Act,
- (c) any other expenses incurred in consequence of this Act by a Minister of the Crown or government department or by either House of Parliament, and
- (d) any increase attributable to this Act in the sums which under any other Act are payable out of money so provided.

#### Textual Amendments

- F174** Words in s. 85 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\), art. 9, Sch. 2 para. 12\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- F175** Words in s. 85(b) inserted (9.12.2015) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Information and Public Records\) Order 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1897\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. para. 2\(2\)\(g\)](#)
- F176** Words in s. 85(b) substituted (9.11.2016) by [The Transfer of Functions \(Elections, Referendums, Third Sector and Information\) Order 2016 \(S.I. 2016/997\), art. 1\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 14\(2\)\(s\)](#) (with art. 12)

## 86 Repeals.

Schedule 8 (repeals) has effect.

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

### Commencement Information

**I28** S. 86 wholly in force at 1.1.2005; s. 86 in force for certain purposes at 30.11.2000 and in force for certain further purposes at 1.1.2001 see s. 87(1)(2); otherwise in force at 1.1.2005 by [S.I. 2004/3122](#), [art. 2](#)

## 87 Commencement.

- (1) The following provisions of this Act shall come into force on the day on which this Act is passed—
  - (a) sections 3 to 8 and Schedule 1,
  - (b) section 19 so far as relating to the approval of publication schemes,
  - (c) section 20 so far as relating to the approval and preparation by the Commissioner of model publication schemes,
  - (d) section 47(2) to (6),
  - (e) section 49,
  - (f) section 74,
  - (g) section 75,
  - (h) sections 78 to 85 and this section,
  - (i) paragraphs 2 and 17 to 22 of Schedule 2 (and section 18(4) so far as relating to those paragraphs),
  - (j) paragraph 4 of Schedule 5 (and section 67 so far as relating to that paragraph),
  - (k) paragraph 8 of Schedule 6 (and section 73 so far as relating to that paragraph),
  - (l) Part I of Schedule 8 (and section 86 so far as relating to that Part), and
  - (m) so much of any other provision of this Act as confers power to make any order, regulations or code of practice.
- (2) The following provisions of this Act shall come into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed—
  - (a) section 18(1),
  - (b) section 76 and Schedule 7,
  - (c) paragraphs 1(1), 3(1), 4, 6, 7, 8(2), 9(2), 10(a), 13(1) and (2), 14(a) and 15(1) and (2) of Schedule 2 (and section 18(4) so far as relating to those provisions), and
  - (d) Part II of Schedule 8 (and section 86 so far as relating to that Part).
- (3) Except as provided by subsections (1) and (2), this Act shall come into force at the end of the period of five years beginning with the day on which this Act is passed or on such day before the end of that period as the [<sup>F177</sup>Secretary of State] may by order appoint; and different days may be appointed for different purposes.
- (4) An order under subsection (3) may contain such transitional provisions and savings (including provisions capable of having effect after the end of the period referred to in that subsection) as the [<sup>F177</sup>Secretary of State] considers appropriate.
- (5) During the twelve months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed, and during each subsequent complete period of twelve months in the period beginning with that day and ending with the first day on which all the provisions of this Act are fully in force, the [<sup>F177</sup>Secretary of State] shall—

*Status: This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.*

*Changes to legislation: Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- (a) prepare a report on his proposals for bringing fully into force those provisions of this Act which are not yet fully in force, and
- (b) lay a copy of the report before each House of Parliament.

#### **Subordinate Legislation Made**

- P1** S. 87(3) power partly exercised: 14.5.2001 appointed for specified provisions by [S.I. 2001/1637](#), **art. 2**
- S. 87(3) power partly exercised: different dates appointed for specified provisions by [{S.I. 2002/2812}](#), arts. 2-5, Schs. 1-3 (as amended (1.4.2006) by [S.I. 2005/3239](#), **art. 9(2)**, **Sch. 2 para. 8**, [S.I. 2006/63](#), **art. 3(2)(b)** and [S.I. 2006/64](#), **art. 3(2)(b)**)
- S. 87(3) power partly exercised: different dates appointed for specified provisions by [{S.I. 2003/2603}](#), arts. 2-4, Sch. 1
- S. 87(3) power partly exercised: 1.1.2005 appointed for specified provisions by [{S.I. 2004/1909}](#), **art. 2**
- S. 87(3) power fully exercised: 1.1.2005 appointed by [{S.I. 2004/3122}](#), **art. 2**

#### **Textual Amendments**

- F177** Words in s. 87 substituted (19.8.2003) by [The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1887\)](#), **art. 9**, **Sch. 2 para. 12(1)(c)**

### **88 Short title and extent.**

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), this Act extends to Northern Ireland.
- (3) The amendment or repeal of any enactment by this Act has the same extent as that enactment.

**Status:**

This version of this Act contains provisions that are prospective.

**Changes to legislation:**

Freedom of Information Act 2000 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- Sch. 1 para. 53(2)(c) substituted by [S.I. 2024/433 art. 4\(2\)](#)
- Sch. 1 Pt. 6 words inserted by [2021 c. 10 Sch. 6 para. 5](#)
- Sch. 1 Pt. 6 words inserted by [2023 c. 41 Sch. 13 para. 4](#)
- Sch. 1 Pt. 6 words omitted by [S.I. 2024/433 art. 4\(3\)\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 43A(a) words substituted by [2022 c. 31 Sch. 3 para. 47](#)
- Sch. 3 para. 1(1) words inserted by [2003 c. 39 Sch. 4 para. 13](#)