



**WESTERN
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

NOTE:

In light of measures taken in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders are asked to please note the position as regards [Continuity of FOI services](#), given the likelihood of reduced staffing and/or closure of offices.

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Freedom of Information Act

The [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#) offers you access on request to records held by the WDC. It gives you the right to have your personal data corrected or updated, where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading, and to get reasons for decisions taken by the WDC that affect you.

The WDC publishes a list of all non-personal Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. You can access all such FOI requests made since 2018 in [this section](#) of the website. The WDC requires customers to provide certain personal data in order to provide a service and carry out the functions of the organisation. Your personal data may be exchanged with other Government Departments and Agencies in certain circumstances and where lawful. Full details can be found in the Data Privacy Notice, which is available [here](#) or in hard copy upon request.

Making a Request

When making a request, you must:

Submit the request in writing/email, preferably using the official FOI application form, which can be downloaded [here](#), to the contact details at 7 below. The records being sought should be clear and specific. In cases where it is not clear what records are being sought, we will assist you in identifying the records you require. Please include a daytime telephone number to facilitate ease of access.

State in your letter that your request is submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Please specify in your application the manner and form and manner of access desired.(e.g. photocopy, computer disk, etc.)

Where possible, indicate the time period for which you wish to access records e.g. records created between 01 July 2016 and 31 December 2016.

1. Can I get help in making a request?

Yes, if you require any help the FOI Officer will be happy to assist you with your request. The FOI Unit is also available to provide assistance to persons with a disability to exercise their rights under the FOI Act 2014 (e.g. accepting oral requests from requesters' who are unable to read, print and/or write due to their disability, enabling the requester to inspect or have records explained to him/her).

2. How does FOI work?

The FOI Act 2014 requires public bodies to respond to requests from the public for access to any record held by an FOI body. In most cases, public bodies must give their decision on a request within 4 weeks of receiving it. A week is defined in the Act to mean 5 consecutive weekdays excluding Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays.

3. Can I get access to any information that I seek?

The following records come within the scope of FOI Act 2014:

- all records relating to personal information held by the WDC irrespective of when they were created
- all other records created from the commencement of the FOI Act 2014 (21 April 1998)
- any records necessary to the understanding of a current record even if created prior to 21 April 1998
- Personnel records of serving staff created from 21st April, 1995 and those created prior to that date where being used or proposed to be used in a way which adversely affects or may affect the person involved.

However, in order to allow the WDC business to be properly conducted, it will sometimes be necessary to exempt from release certain types of information in some circumstances. These are set out in the Act. Among the key exemptions are records relating to:

- Law enforcement and security,
- Confidential and commercially sensitive information, personal information (other than information relating to the person making the request).

4. Is there a fee for requesting information under the FOI Act 2014?

There is no up-front fee for making a request under the FOI Act 2014.

There is no fee in respect of personal records, except where a large number of records are involved.

In the case of non-personal requests, search and retrieval charges may be applied and for any reproduction costs incurred by the WDC in providing you with the material requested where the total cost exceeds €100

5. How soon can a person making a request for records expect a reply?

Under the FOI Act 2014, a request for records must be acknowledged within 2 weeks and, in most cases, responded to within 4 weeks. A week in the FOI Act means 5 consecutive weekdays excluding Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays. The time

limit for a response to issue in respect of third-party consultation involvement can be extended for a further three weeks.

6. What's the next step if I am unhappy with a decision on my request?

If you are unhappy with the WDC's response you can seek to have a decision re-examined by a more senior member of staff within the WDC. Please forward applications for review of a decision, to the FOI Unit at foi@wdc.ie If you are still unhappy with the decision, you have the right to appeal the decision to the Information Commissioner. Applications should be forwarded directly to info@oic.gov.ie or by post Office of the Information Commissioner, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2 Phone: (01) 639 5689

7. Contact details when making a request:

E-mail: FOI@wdc.ie

Legislation

FOI Act and Statutory Instruments

The FOI Act 2014 is available at the following PDF Link.  [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#)

FOI Regulations are available at the following link [FOI Regulations and Orders](#)

Section 8 FOI Publication Scheme

This guidance is produced pursuant to Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 to publish information on the activities of the public body.

WDC's Section 8: FOI Publication Scheme can be viewed [here](#)

Published FOI Requests

The WDC has a policy of posting a summary of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and the subsequent replies on the WDC's website for reference purposes. View [here](#)

Disclosure Log

FOI requests received since January 2018, (other than requests for personal information), can be viewed [here](#).