



PUBLICATION SCHEME

**As required under the
Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Policy Owner	Corporate Services Section
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1.0 Policy Issue Status

1.1 This policy is a controlled document and is held centrally by the Corporate Services Section.

Version	Date actioned	Actioned by	Reason for change
1.0	November 2003	Helen O'Connor, Corporate Services Manager	First drafted as per Freedom of Information legislation
1.1	December 2004	Helen O'Connor, Corporate Services Manager	Redrafted to include new complaints process
2.0	October 2008	Helen O'Connor, Corporate Services Manager	Reviewed as per ICO's new model publication scheme

2.0 Publication Scheme

2.1 This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner.

2.2 This publication scheme commits the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (the Consumer Council) to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the Consumer Council. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

2.3 The scheme commits the Consumer Council:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the Consumer Council and falls within the classifications specified;
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications specified;
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme;
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public;
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the Consumer Council makes available under this scheme;
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available; and
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

3.0 Classes of information

3.1 The classes of information are as follows:

3.2 **Who we are and what we do.**

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

3.3 **What we spend and how we spend it.**

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

3.4 **What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

3.5 **How we make decisions.**

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

3.6 **Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

3.7 **Lists and registers.**

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

3.8 **The services we offer.**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

3.9 The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure;
- Information in draft form; and
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

3.10 The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available.

- 3.11 The Consumer Council will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.
- 3.12 Where it is within the capability of the Consumer Council, information will be provided on the website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, the Consumer Council will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
- 3.13 In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- 3.14 Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where the Consumer Council is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
- 3.15 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

4.0 Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

- 4.1 The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the Consumer Council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.
- 4.2 Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.
- 4.3 Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.
- 4.4 Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:
- Photocopying;
 - Postage and packaging; and
 - The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.
- 4.5 Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by the Consumer Council, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.
- 4.6 If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

5.0 Written requests

- 5.1 Information held by the Consumer Council that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

6.0 Complaints Procedure

- 6.1 The Consumer Council has an obligation to make information available in the manner described within this scheme. Complaints about failure to do so will be investigated by the Acting Director of Corporate and Strategic Affairs who has overall responsibility for Freedom of Information at the Consumer Council and who will reply with 15 working days. In all cases your complaint will be fully investigated and treated in confidence.

- 6.2 If you remain dissatisfied, you can seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to: The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (Tel: 01625 545 700; Fax: 01625 524 510).

7.0 CLASSES OF INFORMATION

7.1 Who we are and what we do

Information	Format	Charge
Organisational Structure: Description and chart showing the current organisational structure.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Contact details and Information on Members: Information on appointed members including, membership of committees and membership of other bodies. (Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. For example, this class may include information provided in confidence).	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk	Free

7.2 What we spend and how we spend it

Information	Format	Charge
Annual Report: The Annual Report includes the Annual Accounts and a detailed breakdown of all aspects of organisation performance.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Annual Audited Accounts: Shows audited accounts including sources of funds and a statement of annual income and expenditure.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Purchasing Guidelines: Procedure employed when issuing and receiving tender documents in order to ensure that no malpractice can take place.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free

7.3 What our priorities are and how we are doing

Information	Format	Charge
Corporate Plan: Produced triennially, the corporate plan sets out key objectives and targets for The Consumer Council activity for the next three years.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Annual Report: The Annual Report includes the Annual Accounts and a detailed breakdown of all aspects of organisation performance.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Work Programme: Published annually, the Council's Work Programme sets out the organisation's strategic objectives and targets for the year ahead.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Investors in People – Latest Assessor's Report: Details of the latest Investors in People Assessor's Report.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Customer Satisfaction Figures: Levels of satisfaction with the complaints service provided by the Council.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk within the Annual Report. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Complaints Report: Provides an analysis of complaints received and how they have been dealt with.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free

7.4 How we make decisions

Information	Format	Charge
Agreed Council, Committee and Group Papers: Agreed papers, agendas and minutes for Council, Committee and group meetings.	Summaries of papers and agendas for meetings held after 1 December 2002 will be available within 4 weeks of being agreed. These summaries are normally agreed at the following meeting of the group and will not include exempt items, for example, personnel issues or matters concerning Consumer Council development of policy not yet finalised. By request, contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Policy Responses to Consultation Documents: Documents relating to major policy development issues and legislation changes that the Council has responded to.	Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk . Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free

7.5 Our Policies and Procedures

Information	Format	Charge
Management Statement & Financial Memorandum: This document sets out the policy and resources framework within which the General Consumer Council operates.	Hard copy by request – contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Complaints Procedure: Details of the procedure used for handling coal, gas and public transport complaints.	Available on website www.consumerCouncil.org.uk . Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Code of Conduct for Members: This code of practice sets out guidelines regarding their public accountability.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Rates and Allowances: Details of fees and expenses that can be claimed by members for time spent on Council business.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Staff Matters: Policies and procedures relating to employee relations, equal opportunities and pay and conditions. (This class may contain exempt information; reasons will be given where information has been withheld).	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Equality Impact Assessments: Documents carrying out an impact assessment on the nine equality groups set out under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The documents analyse existing evidence to see if specific Council policies have a negative impact on any groups.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Equality Scheme and Annual Progress Reports: The Equality Scheme sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998 on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan: This policy covers fraud and loss within all business areas of GCCNI and details the response plan for suspected fraud.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free
IT and Security Policy: A statement of Council policy in relation to the proper use and security of its IT equipment and systems.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free

7.6 Lists and Registers

Information	Format	Charge
Register of Interests: Register of conflicting personal and business interests.	Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.	Free

7.7 The Services we Offer

Information	Format	Charge
<p>Publications: An up to date list of publications currently available from the Consumer Council.</p>	<p>Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.</p>	Free
<p>Press Releases: Material released to the press and other media.</p>	<p>Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.</p>	Free
<p>Advice: General leaflets on the work of the Council. Advice and information on transport, fuel and water issues.</p>	<p>Hard copies by request - contact 028 9067 2488.</p>	Free
<p>Research Reports: The Consumer Council has produced a range of consumer research reports.</p>	<p>Available on website www.consumercouncil.org.uk in portable document form. Hard copy by request - contact 028 9067 2488.</p>	Free