



The Freedom of Information Officer's Handbook

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Description

Freedom of information (FOI) is now an international phenomenon with over 100 countries from Albania to Zimbabwe enacting the right to know for their citizens. Since 2005, the UK's Freedom of Information Act has opened up thousands of public bodies to unparalleled scrutiny and prompted further moves to transparency.

Wherever the right to know is introduced, its success depends on the way it is implemented. In organisations worldwide, FOI only works because of those who oversee its operation on a day-to-day basis, promoting openness, processing requests and advising colleagues and the public. FOI is dependent on the FOI Officers.

The Freedom of Information Officer's Handbook is a comprehensive guide to FOI and its management. It is designed to be an indispensable tool for FOI Officers and their colleagues. It includes:

- a guide to the UK's FOI Act, the right to know and the exemptions
- clear analysis of the most important case law and its implications for the handling of FOI requests
- pointers to the best resources to help FOI officers in their work
- explanations of how FOI interacts with other legislation, including detailed explorations of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and how the EU's General Data Protection Regulation impacts on FOI
- a look at requirements to proactively publish information and the effect of copyright and re-use laws on FOI and open data
- comparisons of the UK's Act with FOI legislation in other jurisdictions from Scotland to South Africa
- an exploration of the role of the FOI Officer: who they are, what they do, their career development and what makes them effective
- suggestions on how to embed FOI within an organisation using effective procedures, technology and training
- a stage-by-stage guide to processing requests for information.

The Freedom of Information Officers' Handbook includes the latest developments in FOI

including amendments made to the UK's FOI Act by the Data Protection Act 2018 and the revised s.45 code of practice published by the Cabinet Office in July 2018.

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Author

Paul Gibbons is an independent consultant and trainer specialising in information rights. He is best known for his FOIMan blog which he began writing in 2010 reflecting on his own experiences of implementing FOI in three very different public authorities: the Greater London Authority, an NHS Trust in south-east London and SOAS, a college of the University of London. Before getting involved in FOI, Paul completed a Masters in

Archives Administration at Aberystwyth University, going on to work for many years as a records manager in the pharmaceutical industry, local government and in the Houses of Parliament. He was later awarded an LLM with distinction in Information Rights, Law and Practice by the University of Northumbria. In addition to the continuing FOIMan blog, he writes a regular series of articles for the Freedom of Information Journal and has also featured in the Daily Telegraph and Times Higher Education Magazine. In the past he has contributed articles to the Records Management Journal and the Journal of the Society of Archivists (as it then was). He is a member of the examination board for PDP's Freedom of Information Practitioner Certificate and is regularly invited to speak at conferences and other events on FOI, data protection and other information rights issues.