



Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act gives the general public a right of access to all types of recorded information held by the practice. The intention of the Act is to encourage a spirit of openness and transparency in the NHS and the whole public sector. Our organisation aims to fully support this.

The public have had full access rights from **January 2005**. This means that far more information will be routinely and freely made available. This is subject to some exemptions, which will be outlined later in this leaflet.

Any individual or organisation can make a request for information. The applicant does not have to explain why this information is requested. The Act gives the right to:

- be told if information exists
- receive information (ideally in the format requested, for example, as a copy or summary or the applicant may ask to inspect a record)

Responding to requests

All requests for information must be responded to within 20 working days. A fee can be charged when dealing with a request. This will be calculated in accordance with the Act. If a fee is required for information requested, the 20 day timescale can be put on hold until such a time as the fee is received.

The Secretary of State has set limits to charges, should the request for information exceed these charges, this practice does not have to action the request. There maybe a charge for information not covered by the Act or for large amounts of information that might not otherwise be disclosed due to the cost.

The practice is not obliged to comply with vexatious requests or repeated or substantially similar requests from the same person other than at reasonable intervals.

Exemptions

There is a range of exemptions covering personal data, security, formulation of government policy commercial and individual confidentiality. A further absolute exemption is where information is accessible by other means or if the information has been provided in confidence. Other exemptions include information relating to commercial interests and audit functions.

Request for information

Requests must be in writing (email and fax acceptable) and must include the name and address for the correspondence and a clear description of the information requested.

Requests for information should be made to: The Practice Manager, Dr Ingram & Partners

The Information Commissioner

The information Commissioner is an independent public body and reports directly to Parliament. The Commissioner is responsible for implementing the Act. Further information available at:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Other informative FOIA websites:

<http://www.foi.nhs.uk/>