

Accessing Information from Hull City Council



P&S 63

This document can be made available in other languages and formats including large print, audio tape and Braille as appropriate. Please telephone (01482) 300300



HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM YOUR COUNCIL

There are various pieces of legislation that give you rights to access information held by us. The information can be held in computer systems, paper files, e-mails, photographs and on plans. The two main pieces of legislation are the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives anyone the right to ask for any information held by a public organisation; The Data Protection Act 1998 gives anyone the right to a copy of their personal information held by an organisation. More information on these rights and legislation are contained in this booklet, on the Council web site and from The Information Commissioners Office, which is the government body set up to ensure compliance with the legislation. Contact details for these are provided at the end of this booklet.

Does the Council provide help?

Yes, if you need help with any information provided, the forms or this booklet, just let us know and we will assist you. A translation service is also available.

What type of services does the Council provide?

Adoption and Fostering Services	Housing Applications/Allocations
Adult Care Management	Housing Benefit
Adult Education	Leisure Centres
Advice and Support for Business	Libraries
Animal Welfare	Licensing
Archives	Mental Health Services
Arts Unit	Museums and Art Galleries
Buildings Rental	Occupational Training
Building Regulations Applications	Parks and Cemeteries
Business and Commercial Land	Planning Applications
Catering	Private Housing Grants
Children and Young People's Services	Pupil Services
Community Support	Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Concessionary Fares	Rent Collection
Construction	Repairs Service
Coroner's Office	Right to Buy
Council Tax	School Governors' Support
Customer Service Centres	School Transport/Contracts
Democratic Services	Sheltered Housing
Disabilities Support	Social Services
Education Awards and Benefits	Special Educational Needs
Education Psychologist Service	Street Cleansing
Education Welfare Service	Supported People
Environmental and Public Protection	Teenage Pregnancy Support
Events and Entertainments	Theatres and Halls
Food Safety	Tourism and Conferences
Grounds Maintenance	Trading Standards
Highways and Street Lighting	Waste Disposal
Homelessness	

More information on our services can be found on the council web site at <http://www.hullcc.gov.uk>



What information does the Council not hold?

The services below are provided by other public authorities and we do not usually have access to their information. You will need to apply to them directly to see the information they hold.

Schools - Some information is held centrally relating to current pupils and students, but schools also hold comprehensive information and you must apply directly to the school to see what information they hold.

Health - National Health information is held by the Health Authorities.

Police - Police information is held by the Humberside Police Authority.

WHAT IS THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT?

The Freedom of Information Act applies to all public organisations and gives the public the right:

- to be given the information requested within 20 working days

Subject to:

- The payment of the appropriate fee (if any)
- You providing enough detail so that we can identify the information and its location
- Any exemptions under the Act

What is the Publication Scheme?

We are obliged under the Act to have a Publication Scheme, which lists all the information we routinely publish or intend to publish. This includes details on how the information is published (i.e. hard copy/electronic), and any costs or exemptions which might apply. The Publication Scheme can be viewed on our website.

How do I request information?

Submit a request in writing or by e-mail to the contacts detailed at the end of this booklet, describing the information you require. A form to assist you and make the process easier should be made available with this booklet but can be obtained from the contacts listed at the end of this booklet, or from our website.

When the information is sent to you it will include details on how to complain if you are not satisfied with the response.



Is there a fee to pay?

There may be a charge for photocopying, printing and postage. This is for information costing less than £450.00 to retrieve. The £450.00 is estimated using a Government formula based on an hourly rate for retrieval.

We will consider requests costing more than £450.00, however under the legislation, we do not have to answer these requests.

Is there information under the Act I do not have a right to see?

Requests for information may also be subject to certain exemptions, these are reasons why information may be withheld, e.g. Information relating to law enforcement, personal information and commercially sensitive information.

If a fee and exemptions do not apply you will usually receive the information within 20 working days.

What if I want to use the information?

The information provided to you under the Act is subject to copyright and does not give you an automatic right to re-use it in a way that would break copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research or private study you are carrying out and for purposes of news reporting.

If you would like to re-use the information for any other purpose you can apply in writing or by email to the Council's contacts listed at the back of this booklet, stating your name and address, which document you wish to re-use and the purpose for which the document will be used.

WHAT IS THE DATA PROTECTION ACT?

This law was introduced to protect personal data, information about individuals (you and me), no matter how it is processed, what it is processed for or who processes it.

How does it protect personal data about me?

By setting rules and conditions which all organisations (private and public) using personal information must obey when obtaining and using information about you. The Act also provides you with certain rights which organisations must respect.

The Data Protection Act gives the public the right to:

- ask the Council whether or not we hold personal information about you
- ask what the information is used for
- to be told about other organisations or persons with whom we share your information
- ask for incorrect information to be corrected
- ask us not to use personal information about you for direct marketing or in any way which is likely to cause you damage or distress, and not to make decisions about you based on the automatic processing of the information (The Council currently does not use any computer systems which make decisions automatically)



- seek compensation for damage or distress, should these be caused by our failure to comply with certain requirements of the Act

Why does the Council keep personal information?

So that we can provide you with the services you require, collect the council tax, business rates and rent, calculate housing benefit etc., and maintain a record of the services you have requested. Your personal details are a vitally important part of making sure that we deliver effective and efficient services.

Does the Council need my consent to use information about me?

We require your consent if we are going to use information about you for purposes not related to those services that we are required to provide by law. If we intend using information for purposes other than that for which it was originally collected then we will need your consent. All application forms and requests for personal information should explain why the information is required and seek your consent if it is required.

What are the Council's obligations to me under the Act?

When you supply us with information, you will be told all the purposes for which it may be used and to whom it may have to be disclosed and we will only use your information for these purposes.

We will not disclose your information to any third party without your consent, unless:

- we are legally required to do so
- or it is in the public interest
- or it is necessary in order to provide you with the services to which you are entitled or have requested
- or it is in the vital interests of someone

We have a duty to protect public funds and to prevent or detect crime. It may be necessary from time to time to share some of your information with other local authorities, Government departments, and bodies with a similar duty, for this purpose.

We will try to ensure that any third party to whom we disclose your information uses it only for purposes that we have stipulated.

We will periodically review the information that we hold about you and delete information that is out of date and no longer needed.



We will ensure your information is kept secure and is processed fairly and lawfully.

How do I ask to see information about me?

You must complete a 'Subject Access Request Form' which should be available with this booklet or can be obtained from the contacts listed at the end of this booklet.

Do you have to pay to see your information?

Yes, we will charge a fee of £10.00 for Subject Access Requests and this must be sent with your request form. You will receive a response to your written request within 40 days.

What information will I receive?

The information the Council holds about you in both its computer and manual records for the area(s) you have requested. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can complain to the Information Commissioners Office (contact details are at the end of this booklet).

How to contact us

Telephone:

Hull Connect on 01482 300300

Post:

The Information Governance Team
Room 154
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Kingston upon Hull
HU1 2AA

e-mail:

information@hullcc.gov.uk

Web site:

www.hullcc.gov.uk

How to contact:

The Office of the Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

web site address: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

ICO Helpline: 08456 30 60 60
01625 54 57 45

