

The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland



Get to grips with Scotland's Freedom of Information Act!

Practical training for users

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act has now been in force for almost 5 months. Much previously secret information has been revealed on issues such as the risk of contaminated blood being used for transfusions, restaurant hygiene, compensation claims against schools, PFI deals, surgeons' success rates, windfarms, breaches of environmental laws, ministerial gifts and expenses and the Holyrood building project. If your work involves journalism, campaigning, research, lobbying, advising people about their rights or representing individuals in dispute with public bodies you cannot afford to ignore the new law.

The Campaign for Freedom of Information which played a leading role in securing the Act, is offering a practical training course to help people learn how to make effective use of this important but complex new legislation.

The course will provide a working guide to the Act, including:

- using the FOI Act to challenge decisions or uncover stories
- lessons learnt from the Act's first 5 months
- cracking the first secret – what's in the files?
- how to draft an effective request
- potential pitfalls and how to avoid them
- navigating your way round the exemptions
- using the Act's most powerful feature – the public interest test
- the role of FOI officer – your new friend in government?
- why an authority that obstructs you is breaking the law
- challenging refusals and enforcing your rights

The course will also cover the new Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIRs), which provide a separate right of access to environmental information, and the UK FOI Act.

Around 10,000 public authorities are covered by the Scottish Act and EIRs: Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Executive, local government, the NHS, the police, universities and colleges, advisory committees, museums, quangos and the Scottish Parliament. The EIRs also apply to waste disposal and other environmental contractors working for public authorities.

The course will be led by the Campaign's director, Maurice Frankel, a leading expert in the field who has worked with the Campaign since it was established 20 years ago. He has considerable experience of overseas FOI laws and UK access rights. He helps to train public authority staff on the legislation and has been a member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Implementation of the UK FOI Act.

Although this course is primarily aimed at users, it will provide a practical guide to the legislation which may also be useful for public authorities.

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Derek Manson-Smith
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The half-day afternoon course will be held in Glasgow on 27 June 2005 at the Teacher Building, 14 St Enoch Square, Glasgow G1 4DB. The Teacher Building is 3 minutes walk from Central Station and 5 minutes walk from Queen St Station. A map is available from <http://www.teacherbuilding.co.uk/location/map.htm>. Registration will be at 1.30 pm, the course will run from 1.45 pm to 5 pm and refreshments will be provided.

To book a place, complete and return the form below with payment to:

Derek Manson-Smith
 Co-convener
 Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland
 6A Park Circus Place, Glasgow G3 6AN

Or fax to: 0870 056 0844.

Please contact Derek Manson-Smith on 0141 332 2341 or email dms@ircuk.demon.co.uk with enquiries about the course.

BOOKING FORM

27 June 2005 course			
Rate (per person)	Price	No. of places	Total
Individuals*/freelance journalists (see note below)	£35		
Small NGOs** (see note below)	£60		
Media/other NGOs	£95		
Public authorities/others	£150		
Grand Total:			

*This category applies to individuals other than those with a professional or commercial interest

**Small NGOs are those with a turnover of less than £80,000

For bookings of more than one person from the same organisation we offer a 30% discount on the second and subsequent places. Please deduct this from the total.

If these prices would prevent you from coming, we may be able to offer some reduced price places – please ask.

Contact details (please give full details for each person)

Name	Job Title	Organisation	Address	Tel No	Email

Select payment method (tick box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	I enclose a cheque payable to 'Campaign for Freedom of Information Scotland' for £.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	By invoice (please give details below)

Invoice details

Name: _____

Email: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____