

The Freedom of Information Act

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 comes into force at bodies such as HPC from 1st January 2005. This offers the “right to know” to members of the public, concerning those items not containing extensive personal information. Information must be located and disclosed or disclosure refused within a short time scale. The Executive have taken steps to speed the search process to allow HPC to fulfil its obligations under the Freedom Of Information act.

Introduction

The Freedom Of Information Act 2000 comes into force on 1st January 2005. This allows access to information (not necessarily documents) from Public Bodies. Potential impact of the act could be a deluge of requests requiring response within 20 working days, and an unbudgetable cost to copy and supply information. At the time of writing the Office of Constitutional Affairs are yet to finalise new charging regimes.

Decision

This paper is for note only. No decision is required.

Background information

The Information Commissioner has published the following guidance to members of the public;

If you wish to obtain information about yourself, then the Data Protection Act 1998 will apply and you should make a Subject Access Request.

If the information that you are looking for is not about you, but in relation to a public authority, then the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will apply.

The Act gives you a general right of access to “recorded” information held by public authorities.

Resource implications

No predictable implications at this stage.

Financial implications

No predictable implications at this stage. However should HPC be flooded with requests, temporary staff could be required to fulfil our obligations under the Act.

Background papers (See Council member internet site.)

Freedom of Information Act HPC Publication scheme. HPC Destruction policy.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 see <http://www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm>

Notes from the executive – guidance to FOI implementation at HPC.

Appendices

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2004-11-24	a	INF	PPR	Summary of Freedom of Information requirements at HPC Dec 2004	Final DD: None	Public RD: None