

Freedom of Information Act

Information Commissioner & Tribunal Decisions

What do they mean in practice?

A half-day course in central London – 4 October 2006

Over 320 decision notices have now been issued under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations. The body of decisions is growing rapidly: the Information Commissioner issued 46 rulings this June alone. Many of these break new ground, showing how the exemptions, public interest test and procedural requirements are being interpreted. At the same time the Information Tribunal has begun deciding on appeals against the Commissioner's decisions, adopting a distinctive, pro-openness approach. Some decisions of the Scottish Information Commissioner throw light on issues not yet addressed in UK rulings. Between them these decisions are essential materials for anyone trying to understand what public authorities must do to comply with the new legislation.

About the trainer

The course will be presented by the Campaign's director, **Maurice Frankel**, who has worked in the field for 22 years. He was actively involved in persuading the government to introduce FOI and seeking improvements to the legislation in Parliament. He now trains public authority staff and requesters in the legislation. He was a member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Group on Implementation of the FOI Act and before that the Home Secretary's Advisory Group on Openness in the Public Sector. He sat on the ODPM group looking at aligning the Local Government Act 1972 with the FOI Act. He was a member of the Commonwealth Group of Experts whose FOI Principles were adopted by Commonwealth Law Ministers in 1999. He drafted the successful private members' bills which became the Access to Personal Files Act 1987, the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, the Environment and Safety Information Act 1988 and the Access to Health Records Act 1990. He received an OBE for services to open government in 2004.

The course will cover key decisions to date under both the FOI Act and EIRs highlighting those that:

- Set precedents for future cases
- Require public authorities to change the way they respond to requests
- Conflict with or uphold official guidance
- Have unexpected implications
- Illustrate good practice
- Identify Scottish decisions that may be relevant to UK authorities
- Indicate how the law is evolving

This course is primarily aimed at public authorities, lawyers and other specialists working in the field.

We can also provide this course in-house.

If you're unable to attend this course but would like to be informed about future courses please contact us by email at admin@cfoi.demon.co.uk or telephone on 020 7831 7477.

Campaign for Freedom of Information

www.cfoi.org.uk

Course content:

An examination of the issues highlighted by decisions so far, including:

- The Freedom of Information / Data Protection interface
- “Fair” & “unfair” disclosure of personal data
- EIR decisions to date
- The evolving definition of “vexatious”
- When is information “held”?
- Advice & assistance for requests exceeding the cost limit
- How “likely” must prejudice be?
- Breach of confidence and FOI
- Information about an authority’s own commercial interests
- Risks to health and safety of staff
- Law enforcement and accountability
- Disclosures that inhibit frankness
- Can likely media coverage be a factor in considering exemptions?
- Where the public interest test has tipped the balance

Course details

Date: 4 October 2006

Time: 1.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Cost: £200 per person*

Venue

Local Government House

Smith Square

London SW1P 3HZ

** A discount of 25% is available to individuals who have attended this course in the previous 12 months*

Ways to book

Campaign for Freedom of Information
Suite 102, 16 Baldwins Gardens
London EC1N 7RJ

Email: admin@cfoi.demon.co.uk

Phone: 020 7831 7477

Fax: 020 7831 7461

Booking form

Name:	Position:
Organisation:	Tel:
Email:	
Address:	
Please reserve.....places(s) on the 4 October 2006 course	
Others attending from your organisation:	
1) Name:	
Email:	
2) Name:	
Email:	
PAYMENT OPTIONS (PLEASE TICK)	
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a cheque for £.....payable to ‘Campaign for Freedom of Information’	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please invoice my organisation. Invoice to be sent to:	
DISCOUNT	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am eligible for a 25% discount having attended a previous course	