

Why your FOI requests are being blocked

and what you can do about it

A half day course in central London on Wednesday October 25 2006

Are your freedom of information requests running into a brick wall? Are you being told that the information you want is exempt or would cost too much to provide? Are you unsure whether these arguments are legitimate? This course will help you decide whether refusals are justified or should be challenged - and help you argue your case.

The Information Commissioner, who enforces the Freedom of Information Act, has now made over three hundred decisions, revealing how key provisions of the Act are being interpreted.

The Information Tribunal has issued some 20 rulings on appeals against the Commissioner's decisions.

These decisions can help to predict when a FOI request is likely to succeed and when a refusal may be justified.

This course will explain what these important decisions mean for your requests and how they can help you use the Act more effectively.

The course will:

- explain how the Commissioner is interpreting key exemptions, such as those for personal data, commercial interests, confidentiality, law enforcement, investigations, policy formulation, legal privilege and the effective conduct of public affairs
- help you use these decisions to judge whether an authority has overstepped the mark in refusing a request
- help you decide whether to challenge refusals and, if so, how
- explain where the public interest test has led to the release of exempt information

- improve the way you formulate your requests by helping you to sidestep exemptions and focus on information that is difficult for an authority to refuse
- explain when your request can be refused on cost grounds – and how to check whether the refusal is valid
- help you recognise when you may be going down a blind alley - and should think about changing your approach
- explain what advice and assistance authorities should provide to you
- describe decisions under the Environmental Information Regulations, which provide a parallel right of access to environmental data
- explain the Commissioner's approach to investigating complaints

The course will be led by the director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information **Maurice Frankel** who has worked with the Campaign since it was set up 22 years ago. He was actively involved in persuading the government to introduce the FOI Act, seeking improvements to it in Parliament and serving on the committee advising ministers on implementation. He has been extensively involved in training public authorities and requesters.

This course is primarily aimed at requesters but may be of interest to public authorities and others. We can also provide the course in-house.

Campaign for Freedom of Information

www.cfoi.org.uk

Course details

Date: 25 October 2006

Time: 1.30 pm – 5.00 pm

Venue: Central London

Cost

£50 individuals*

£95 media/voluntary sector

£130 public authorities/others

**This category applies to individuals using FOI in a personal capacity. It is not intended for those who use or administer the Act in their work or profession.*

We may be able to offer some reduced price places for individuals on limited income – please ask us

Ways to book

Campaign for Freedom of Information
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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 25 October 2006 course	
Others attending from your organisation:	
1) Name:	
Email:	
2) Name:	
Email:	
3) Name:	
Email:	
4) Name:	
Email:	
PAYMENT OPTIONS	
<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:	
Please indicate whether you have:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not used the FOI Act so far	
<input type="checkbox"/> Used the FOI Act occasionally	
<input type="checkbox"/> Used the FOI Act frequently	