

Campaign for Freedom of Information

Using the FOI Act!

Practical training for requesters

Thursday 13 March 2014, London

Do you want to learn how to use the Freedom of Information Act? Are you already using the Act, but want to know more about how key provisions are being interpreted?

Making a FOI request is straightforward but making an *effective* request can be more difficult. Requests which ask for too much information can be refused – and some information may be exempt. But a well thought-out request can have a powerful impact, revealing that a policy isn't working or an authority isn't doing its job or generating key information you need for your research. This practical course is designed to help campaigners, journalists and others make the most of the Act and the parallel Environmental Information Regulations. It explains the legislation, shows how to draft clear and effective requests, describes how to challenge unjustified refusals and highlights critical decisions of the Information Commissioner and Tribunal. The course's interactive sessions will encourage you to work out how best to apply the Act in a variety of situations. This one day course is aimed at both beginners and those who are already using the Act but want to do so more effectively.

Using the Act

The course will explain:

- What information you are entitled to - and from whom
- How to make an effective request
- Key pitfalls and how to avoid them
- What authorities should do to help you
- When requests can be refused on cost grounds
- How the Act's exemptions and the public interest test work
- Challenging refusals

Specific issues

It will also highlight key Commissioner & Tribunal decisions on issues such as:

- Requests for contracts
- Commercial confidentiality claims
- Revealing what lobbyists are up to
- Civil servants' advice
- Why some personal data is disclosable
- When requests for environmental information really pay off
- Arguing the public interest case

The course will be presented by **Maurice Frankel**, who has worked for the Campaign since it was set up in 1984 and been its director since 1987, and **Katherine Gundersen** the Campaign's research officer. The Campaign played the leading role in securing the FOI Act and improving it in Parliament. For more information visit cfoi.org.uk

NOTE: Lawyers may claim non-accredited CPD hours for attending.

Campaign for Freedom of Information

www.cfoi.org.uk

Course details

Date: Thursday 13 March 2014

Time: Registration 9.45 am, course 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Venue: The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA

Price

Individuals, freelance journalists, small NGOs*: £45

Other NGOs i.e. more than 4 staff, media, others: £90

** This category applies to individuals using FOI in a personal capacity, freelance journalists and voluntary organisations with 4 staff or less.*

These prices are subsidised, but if you cannot afford the full price please ask us about a reduction.

Please note lunch is not provided but there is a café in the venue and places to buy lunch nearby.

How to book:

Web: <http://cfoiusingthefoiact130314.eventbrite.co.uk>

Email: admin@cfoi.demon.co.uk

Phone: 020 7490 3958

Or post booking form to -

Campaign for Freedom of Information

Unit 109 Davina House

137-149 Goswell Road

London EC1V 7ET

Booking form

Name:	Organisation:
Email:	Tel:
Number of places required:	
Others attending from your organisation:	
1) Name:	
Email:	
2) Name:	
Email:	
3) Name:	
Email:	
4) Name:	
Email:	
METHOD OF PAYMENT:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a cheque for £..... payable to 'Campaign for Freedom of Information'	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please invoice my organisation (give name & address of contact to whom invoice should be sent):	
PLEASE NOTE: PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THE COURSE	