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**Information Guide and   
Freedom of Information Act   
Publication Scheme**

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**Version Control**

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| **Date** | **Summary of Changes** | **Date Approved by SMT** | **Date of next review** |
| 07/04/2025 | New Publication Scheme V4.2 | 07/04/2025 | March 2026 |
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# **Introduction**

## About this Information Guide and the Publication Scheme

Under [Section 19(1) of the Freedom of Information Act](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/19) (FOIA) every public authority is required to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it intends to publish the information and whether or not a charge will be made for the information.

Similarly, the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), which covers information relating to how we interact with the environment, provides public access to environmental information held by public authorities in two ways:

* We must make environmental information available proactively; and,
* We must reply to requests made for environmental information.

The Information Commissioner, who is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the FOIA and EIR, has drawn up a [Model Publication Scheme](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf) and a [Definition Document](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1237/definition-document-northern-ireland-government-departments.pdf) for all public sector organisations. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) has adopted the Information Commissioner’s model Publication Scheme. The Scheme is organised into seven classes of information which are set out below. This structure aims to save you time and effort when searching for information.

You can also use our [Publications search](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/search-results?query=publications) which contains all the documents we have made available.

The purpose of this Information Guide is to:

* help you see what information we make available about who we are, what we do and how we do it;
* state what charges may be applied when we provide a publication to you;
* explain how to find the information we publish easily;
* provide contact details for enquiries and to get help with accessing the information; and
* explain how to request information we hold that has not been published.

## Availability and Formats

The information we publish through the Publication Scheme is, where possible, available on our website. We offer alternative arrangements for people who do not want to, or cannot, access the information online. For example, we can usually arrange to send information out in paper copy (see Charges section below, as there may be a charge for this).

## Procedure for Making Requests

Parties requesting information from us should contact us and include the following details:

* your contact details – name, address, email address and phone number;
* information or documents that you would like access to, providing as much detail as possible;
* the format that you would like the information to be sent to you.

If you make a request for a hard or electronic copy of a document covered by this Scheme, we will respond, whether by telephone, letter or email within 20 working days of receipt, unless the information is exempt from disclosure. The 20 working day time-frame for us to respond to requests may be extended where necessary in accordance with the FOIA to:

* Consider the public interest test, or
* If under EIR, the time may be extended to 40 days if the request is complex or voluminous.

The date of receipt will be either:

* The day on which the request is physically or electronically delivered to us, or directly into the email inbox of a member of staff; or
* If we have asked the requester for further details to identify and locate the requested information, the date on which the necessary clarification is received.

In keeping with the FOIA, we will comply with the following:

* The right of the individual to be told whether the information exists;
* The right of the individual to receive the information, subject to exemptions. An explanation of how the public interest or prejudice (harm) tests were carried out will be included where necessary. We may be able to provide partial information in some cases and will endeavour to do so.

We will contact you if we require further information on identifying the information you have requested or if your request is too broad and needs to be refined. Please note the data held by us to enable us to fulfil our statutory functions and to comply with our legal obligations may not match the information you have requested.

When it is not possible, due to legislation, to provide the information that you have requested, we will inform you and explain the reasons why.

We are committed to providing advice and assistance to anyone seeking information and are pleased to discuss or clarify matters as appropriate. All requests will be logged, and any applicant is welcome to check the progress of request at any time.

## Exempt Information

We will publish the information we hold that falls within the classes of information detailed below. FOIA sets out a series of exemptions to protect confidential or other information where disclosure may prejudice the interests of the State or third parties. If a document contains information that is exempt under the Act and any related laws (for example, personal information), we will remove or redact the information before publication and explain why.

We are committed to providing information as is legally possible, however, the provision of some personal data which is defined as special category data which we hold may be restricted under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the UK General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (UK GDPR), and other statutory provisions. Details of the exemptions can be found in Annex A.

## Copyright

Where GTCNI owns the copyright in its published information, the information may be reproduced by you provided that this is done fairly, non-commercially and GTCNI is acknowledged as the source where it is supplied to others. Where GTCNI does not own the copyright in any published information, this will be highlighted.

## Charges

This section explains when we may make a charge for our publications and how any charge will be calculated. There is no charge to view information on our website.

In general, we will provide information free of charge, however, if a great deal of work is required, then an applicant may be charged, for example, summary statistical information which is not routinely produced and takes over one working day to produce. If a charge is to be levied, the applicant will be notified of the charge prior to us preparing the information.

No charges will be made where we refuse a request for information. Nor will there be a charge to appeal our refusal to supply the information or where you appeal against the charges we would make.

We reserve the right to impose charges for hard copy publications in certain circumstances, for example, where existing stocks have been discontinued.

We may charge for providing a publication to you to cover, for example, photocopying costs and postage costs. We will charge you no more than it actually costs us to supply the information and will always tell you what the cost is before providing the information to you.

If considerable work is involved, our photocopying charge is as shown below.

* Black and white photocopying: A4 size of paper 10 pence per sheet.
* Colour photocopying: A4 size of paper 20 pence per sheet.

Postage costs will be recharged at the rate we paid to send the information to you. Our charge is for sending information by Royal Mail First Class.

Please note that this charging schedule does not apply to any commercial publications that we may publish from time to time.

## Contact us

You can [**contact us**](mailto:GTCNI%20Data%20Protection%20%3cdpo@gtcni.org.uk%3e) for assistance with any aspect of this Publication Scheme.

## Our Complaints and Appeals Process

If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request and / or our response, you have the right to request an internal review or to make a complaint. Complaints regarding the handling of your request can be made through our feedback and Complaints process. More information is available in our [Freedom of Information Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information).

If you are unhappy with the outcome of an internal review, you have the right to apply to the [**Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)**](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/) for a review of our original decision within three months of the last correspondence with us on this matter.

Requests for reviews and/or appeals should be submitted using the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) [Complaints Form](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/) which once completed, should be emailed to the ICO at [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).

At present, ICO undertakes to respond within six months of the complaint being made. If you remain dissatisfied and you wish to appeal against the ICO’s decision, you can appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal (Information Rights). You must complete the appropriate [Application Form](http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk/HMCTS/GetForm.do?court_forms_id=2799).

## Feedback and Continuous Improvement

We consider it important that this Publication Scheme meets the public’s need and are committed to keeping it under continuous review. We welcome suggestions for additional classes of information that could be included. We also welcome suggestions as to how the publications themselves may be improved.

We will review the details of this Publication Scheme on an annual basis and re-issue it accordingly. As part of this review, we will monitor the number of requests for information not covered by the Scheme and aim to introduce such information to the Scheme, if it is not exempted.

Our contact details are below:

The Data Protection Officer

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

3-4 Floor Albany House

73-75 Great Victoria Street

Belfast

BT2 7AF

+44 28 90333390

[foi@gtcni.org.uk](mailto:foi@gtcni.org.uk)

dpo@gtcni.org.uk

<https://www.gtcni.org.uk>

# **About GTCNI**

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) was established under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the 1998 Order). GTCNI is an Arm’s Length Body (ALB) of, and is accountable to, the Department of Education (DE). The designated Accounting Officer is GTCNI’s Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is required to ensure that effective systems of internal control are in place and adhered to, and that GTCNI complies with all relevant legislation and codes.

GTCNI’s responsibilities are set out in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and subsequent 2003 and 2006 Education (NI) Orders.

Under the 1998 Order, we are tasked with maintaining a Register of Teachers who have been assessed to be qualified to teach in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.

More information on what we do is available [here](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/about-gtcni).

**Information we make Available**

We publish information that we hold within the classes below. Where information has been updated or superseded, only the current version will be available. If you would like to see previous versions, you may make a request to us for that information.

About Us

* [Information about our legislative basis](https://gtcni.org.uk/privacy-notice).
* [Our corporate governance framework](https://gtcni.org.uk/about-us/governance).
* [Our risk management framework](file:///M:\CORPORATE%20GOVERNANCE%20&%20RISK%20MANAGEMENT\RISK%20MANAGEMENT\RISK%20MANAGEMENT%20FRAMEWORK\2024-25\GTCNI%20Risk%20Management%20Framework%202024-25.docx)
* [agendas and minutes of meetings](https://gtcni.org.uk/about-us/council-meetings-minutes)
* [staffing structure](https://gtcni.org.uk/about-us/the-gtcni-team)
* [office contact details](file:///C:\Users\gtc-jarviss\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\Template%201%20-%20Acknowledgement.docx)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

Financial Information

* [Annual Report and Accounts](https://gtcni.org.uk/about-us/annual-reports-accounts)
* [Schedule of contracts over £1000 awarded by CPD on our behalf](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/cpd-contracts-awarded-1-april-2016-onwards)
* [Pay and grading structure](https://gtcni.org.uk/about-us/annual-reports-accounts)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

What our Priorities are and how are we doing

* [Programme for Government](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/programme-government)
* Our Corporate plan
* Our Business plan
* [Statistics](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/digest-of-statistics)
* [Research](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/publications)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

How we make Decisions

* [Equality Consideration](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity)
* [Policy Equality Screening](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity)
* [Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/assets/files/gtcni-public-authority-statutory-equality-and-good-relations-duties-annual-progress-report-2023-24.pdf)
* [Policy Guidance](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/practical-guide-policy-making-northern-ireland)
* [Business Cases and PPE](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/better-business-cases-ni)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

Our Policies and Procedures

* [Equality Scheme](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity)
* [Disability Action Plan](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity)
* Information Guide and FOI Publication Scheme
* [Freedom of Information Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information)
* [Data Protection Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information)
* [Health and Safety Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/publications?selectedCategories%5b0%5d=policies)
* [Privacy Notice – Applicants and Registrants to the Register of Teachers](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/privacy-notice)
* [Privacy Notice – Employees, Contractors, Agency Workers](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/privacy-notice)
* [Complaints Procedure](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/complaints)
* [Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/governance)
* [Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns at Work Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/governance)
* [External Twitter Policy](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/assets/files/Resource365/Publications/gtcni-external-twitter-policy.pdf)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

## **Lists and Registers**

* FoI / EIR Disclosure Log
* [The Register of Teachers](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/registration/searching-the-register)

Accessibility/Exemptions Fully available

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format

The Services we Offer

* [Information / Guidance about Teacher Registration Process](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/registration/overview)
* [Guidance for Employers to access Information on Registered Teachers](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/employers/registration-status)
* [Qualification Rules for Teachers](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/getting-into-teaching)
* [Our Code of Values and Professional Practice](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/overview)
* [Teaching – The Reflective Profession](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/overview)
* [Guidance on Leadership Competences](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/leadership-competences)
* [Guidance on Teacher Induction and Early Professional Development](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/induction-epd)
* [GTCNI Charter for Education](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/assets/files/publications/charter-for-education.pdf)
* [Refocusing the Teaching of Poetry at Key Stage 3](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/resource-365/stories/2019/re-focusing-the-teaching-of-poetry-at-key-stage)
* [Sutton Trust Report – What Makes Great Teaching](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/assets/files/resources/what-makes-great-teaching-report.pdf)
* [Periodic eZines – Professional Update / Termtalk](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/about-us/publications?selectedCategories%5b0%5d=policies)
* [Teacher Regulation Rules and Policies](https://www.gtcni.org.uk/regulation/rules-policies)

Accessibility/Exemptions The UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and other statutory instruments for example the Education (NI) Order 1998 determine what we are able to make available under this class of information.

How information will be published Available electronically and on our website

Language English

Charging No charge for electronic format