



THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Publication Scheme

as required under the

Freedom of Information Act 2000

January 2009

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

PUBLICATION SCHEME

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Freedom of Information Act 2000
Publication Scheme for the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland

1. BACKGROUND

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of the Environment and established on 5 September 1974 under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. Its powers were later extended under the Housing Orders (Northern Ireland) 1976 and 1981 and the (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

The Commission's principal composite function is to: exercise 'general oversight of matters connected with the recruitment, training and terms and conditions of employment of officers of councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and of making recommendations to councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on such matters.' Its specific functions are to:

- Recommend and monitor employment procedures and practices
- Advise on Human Resource Planning
- Facilitate effective training and development
- Convene advisory appointment panels
- Ensure effective negotiating machinery within local government
- Promote co-operation within the public service

In order to achieve its statutory function to initiate training initiatives in local government in Northern Ireland, the Commission works closely with the Local Government Training Group (LGTG). This group is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of training activities for which there is an identified common need throughout the local government service. The LGTG is a body specified under the General Grant (Specified Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994. The Commission provides secretariat, professional and financial services to the LGTG, under a service level agreement.

As a public body the Commission is required under the Freedom of Information Act to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme in order to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mention below, where the information is held by the Commission.

The Commission is committed to the highest standards of accountability and openness in the conduct of its business, and this Publication Scheme is prepared to enable the Commission to fulfil its obligations under the legislation and to better inform the public of its communication and information systems. The information contained in this Scheme will be made available to individuals on request under the terms as detailed in the Scheme.

Documents will be made available on request in a range of formats to suit the needs of different users.

Overall responsibility for this publication scheme rests with the Chief Executive of the Commission. The publication scheme is jointly maintained on a day to day basis by the Office Manager/PA to the Chief Executive and the Policy Officer.

2. NOTES ON USING THE SCHEME

This publication scheme sets out the information that the Commission will publish, how and when it will do so, and whether or not this information will be available free of charge. The classes of information to be published are set out under clearly defined headings which reflect the structure and operation of the Commission.

Publication does not refer solely to printed material. Publication has been interpreted as broadly as possible to include electronic documents, information included on the website, minutes of meetings, reports, etc.

It is intended, as far as possible, to make material available on the Commission's website on an ongoing basis (www.lgsc.org.uk).

3. REQUESTING INFORMATION

Where information is available on the website, a hypertext link will provide directions to the correct page on the website. Where information is not available on the website it can be obtained by post. A request can be made to the Commission Offices for any Class of Information as detailed in "Class of Information" pages 5-11 of this document. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to identify the information sought. Requests should be addressed to:

The Chief Executive
Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
Commission House
18-22 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG

Tel: (028) 90313200
Fax: (028) 90313151
Typetalk: 18001 028 90313200
Email: info@lgsc.org.uk

4. CHARGING AND COPYRIGHT ISSUES

The Commission has determined four categories for charging for information required under this Scheme as follows:

1. Free of charge

This category includes general facts and information relating to the Commission as well as information published on the Commission's website (for those without internet access, a single print-out of the specific website content can be requested). It also includes answering telephone queries, providing copies of free leaflets and inspection of reference materials at Commission Offices.

2. Priced Publications

Where the information required is available in a priced publication details of the publication, its cost and where to obtain it will be supplied.

3. Photocopying costs and postage (plus a small administrative charge)

This category covers information which has already been prepared which can easily be photocopied or where a computer printout can be provided. There will be a minimum charge of £5 for such requests.

4. Professional charges for locating and preparing information as requested

Where preparing or gathering the required material can only be done by specialists or other professionals at a charge to the Commission, a written estimate will be given of the cost of providing such information. The cost will have to be paid in advance. The Commission will then aim to provide the information within a target of 20 working days.

Further details of charges can be found in the Commission's 'Charging Structure for Requests for Information under the Commission's Publication Scheme' (see Appendix 1). VAT is not payable on requests made under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Commission has the discretion to waive any charges if appropriate.

No charge will be made where a request for information is refused. There will be no charge to appeal against a refusal to supply requested information as detailed in Section 6 of this document. Nor will there be a charge to appeal against any charges made for requested information.

The Commission owns the copyright to the information it produces. If information is to be re-used or reproduced, commercially or otherwise, written approval must be obtained from the office of the Chief Executive.

5. EXEMPT INFORMATION

In order to protect confidential or other information, where its disclosure may prejudice the interests of others, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 sets out a series of exemptions.

The classes of information which the Commission has specified in this scheme as being classes of information which it publishes or intends to publish may in some cases contain material which we consider to contain exempt information, as defined in Part II of the Act. Accordingly, any such information is excluded from this publication scheme. Where this occurs we will outline which information has been withheld and explain what exemption has been applied and why.

Some examples, relevant to the work of the Commission, of exempt information under Part II of the Act include:

- Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
- Investigations and proceedings conducted by the Commission and related authorities
- Information likely to prejudice law enforcement
- Court records including records of tribunals and inquiries
- Information likely to endanger the health and safety of any individual
- Personal data or information
- Information provided in confidence to/by the Commission
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
- Information relating to commercial interests and trade secrets

It should also be noted that information is exempt under the Act if it is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. One example where information would qualify for this exemption is where it is made available via the Commission's publication scheme. In instances where someone makes a written request for information which is already available via the publication scheme, the Commission will refer the applicant to the scheme.

Where the Commission invokes the exemption provisions to withhold information, an applicant may seek a review of the decision.

6. COMPLAINTS/ REVIEW PROCEDURE

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response from the Commission to a request for information or a response from the Commission for requested information is not received within 20 days or if an applicant is unhappy in relation to charges for information, the applicant may proceed to a two-stage review process. An *internal* review (Stage 1) must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner for an *independent* review (Stage 2).

Stage 1

An internal review should be sought through the office of the Chief Executive of the Commission, Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland, Commission House, 18-22 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG. An officer of the Commission who was not involved with the original request will be nominated by the Chief Executive to undertake the review. The review will be conducted by reference to the applicant's written submission and the Commission's written records. The applicant will be notified of the reviewing officer's decision within 20 working days from receipt of the request for an appeal.

Stage 2

If the applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to: The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (Tel: 08456 306 060; Fax: 01625 545 510).

7. CLASSES OF INFORMATION

The following pages describe the various classes of information and relevant publications. All publications are available on the Commissions website, www.lgsc.org.uk. In addition, the Commission places an audit notice in the local newspapers on an annual basis inviting members of the public to come to the Commission and inspect our annual accounts and supplementary materials and meet with the Local Government Auditor to answer any queries or points of clarification.

In order to increase understanding of the work and organisation of the Commission, published information is classified under seven headings as detailed below:

7.1 WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

7.2 WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

7.3 WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW ARE WE DOING

7.4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

7.5 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

7.6 LISTS AND REGISTERS

7.7 THE SERVICES WE OFFER

7.1 WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

This heading contains organisation information, structures, location and contacts for the Commission.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission's Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Roles and Responsibilities	Provides details about the roles and responsibilities of those working in the Commission	Annual Report Corporate Plan www.lgsc.org.uk
Organisational Structure	Provides an explanation of the internal structures of the Commission referring to its functions and how the structure relates to the roles and responsibilities	Annual Report Corporate Plan www.lgsc.org.uk
Legislative Information	Provides an explanation of the legislative basis of the activities of the Commission	Annual Report Corporate Plan www.lgsc.org.uk
Partnership Arrangements	Details the organisations that the Commission works with in partnership, including its sponsoring Department, the Department of the Environment	Annual Report www.lgsc.org.uk
Information on Members and Senior Staff	Names of Commission members and their role outside the Commission and names of Senior Staff and their role within the Commission	Annual Report www.lgsc.org.uk
Location and Contact Details	This provides the address and contact details of the Commission	All Commission Documents www.lgsc.org.uk

7.2 WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

This heading contains financial information relating to the Commission.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Financial Statements and Budgets	Provides financial information relating to income and expenditure Letter from Local Government Auditor confirming satisfaction with Accounts	Annual Accounts Audit Letter www.lgsc.org.uk
Capital Programme	Information on capital expenditure such as spending reviews, financial audit reports and staff and board members’ allowances and expenses	Annual Accounts www.lgsc.org.uk
Procurement Procedures	Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services.	Central Procurement Directorate Service Level Agreement Commission Financial Procedures www.lgsc.org.uk

7.3 WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES AND HOW ARE WE DOING

This heading details information on the Commission’s strategies and plans, performance indicators, audit, inspections and reviews.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Current Annual Report	The Annual Report includes the Annual Accounts and details progress against objectives and targets throughout the past year.	Annual Report www.lgsc.org.uk
Current Business and Corporate Plans	The coming year’s business objectives and targets for the main services provided by the Commission; also its longer term vision and strategic plan.	Business Plan and Corporate Plan www.lgsc.org.uk
Service Standards	Provides details of service standards provided by the Commission	Background Information Paper www.lgsc.org.uk
Local Government Staff Commission News	A magazine published twice a year providing information to councils in relation to areas of interest and the implementation of Commission initiatives.	LGSC Newsletter www.lgsc.org.uk
Public Service Agreements	Details Service Level Agreements with other public bodies.	www.lgsc.org.uk

7.4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

This heading details the decision making processes and records of decisions.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Major Policy Proposals and Decisions	This information includes the following as detailed below:	
Equality Scheme	This document sets out the Commission’s commitment to and proposals for fulfilling the statutory obligations to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in compliance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It was approved by the Equality Commission in April 2001.	Equality Scheme www.lgsc.org.uk
Section 75 Progress Reports to the Equality Commission	The Commission submits annual Section 75 Progress Reports to the Equality Commission setting out its progress in implementing its Equality Scheme and Section 75 statutory requirements.	Section 75 Progress Reports www.lgsc.org.uk
Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection	This Code sets out good practice in recruitment and selection. The Commission issues it as a statutory recommendation to the 26 district councils. All vacancies in councils are publicly advertised and recruited in line with the procedures in this Code.	Code of Procedures www.lgsc.org.uk

7.4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS (CONTINUED)

This heading details the decision making processes and records of decisions.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission's Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Model Equal Opportunities Policy	This model policy sets out an equal opportunities policy for the 26 district councils. It was initially issued to councils as a statutory recommendation in April 1999 and is regularly reviewed and updated. This policy was most recently updated in 2003/04.	Model Equal Opportunities Policy www.lgsc.org.uk
Model Harassment Policy	This model policy sets out harassment and bullying policy and procedures for the 26 district councils. It was initially issued to councils as a statutory recommendation in April 1999 and is regularly reviewed and updated. This policy was most recently updated in 2003/04.	Model Harassment Policy www.lgsc.org.uk
Equality Impact Assessments	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as timetabled and agreed in the Commission's approved Equality Scheme under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.	www.lgsc.org.uk
Guidelines on handling cases of redundancy, capability and discipline in respect of Chief Executives in NI	This paper was produced to complement the Joint Negotiating Committee agreement of 1997, to build on its contents and give practical guidance and assistance to councils in relation to implementing the procedures on redundancy, capability and discipline.	Guidelines on handling cases of redundancy, capability and discipline in respect of Chief Executives in NI www.lgsc.org.uk
Vacancy Control System - Detailed Guidance - Consultation Document - January 2009	This paper explains the process regarding the development of the Vacancy Control System for local government and is out to consultation with a closing date of 13 March 2009. The VCS guidance document will be updated and issued following consultation and will be effective from May 2009	www.lgsc.org.uk

7.4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS (CONTINUED)

This heading details the decision making processes and records of decisions.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Model Absence Management Scheme	A Model Scheme for councils to adopt and implement in an attempt to reduce absence levels within their organisation.	Model Scheme for Managing Attendance in Local Government in NI www.lgsc.org.uk
Guidance on the staffing implications of organisational development and change	Guidance for councils in relation to the staffing implications of reorganisation and change.	Guidance on the staffing implications of organisational development and change www.lgsc.org.uk
Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees	A model Code issued to councils as a statutory recommendation for them to build upon and individualise for their own councils to detail the conduct expected of council employees when carrying out their duties.	Code of Conduct www.lgsc.org.uk
Model Constitution for a Joint Consultative Committee	A suggested model constitution for a local Joint Consultative Committee in a council	Model Constitution for a Joint Consultative Committee www.lgsc.org.uk

7.4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS (CONTINUED)

This heading details the decision making processes and records of decisions.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Internal communications guidance and criteria used for decision making	This document details the framework within in which the Commission operates	Management Statement (currently draft format) www.lgsc.org.uk
Guidance Note on Employing Migrant Workers	This Guidance Note: - provides information on attracting migrant workers to work in council posts - addresses common issues for councils when employing migrant workers - signposts councils to sources of further information and advice	www.lgsc.org.uk
Guidance Note on Section 75 Monitoring	This Guidance Note: -provides information and suggestions on monitoring in councils -addresses common issues for councils in relation to monitoring -signposts councils to sources of further information and advice	www.lgsc.org.uk
Commission Minutes	Minutes of all Commission meetings are made and the full minutes are inspected by the Local Government Auditor. Copies of minutes are available on request only as confidential information must be removed before publication to the general public. Requests for a copy of minutes should be made to the Chief Executive, LGSC, Commission House, 18-22 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG	

7.5 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This heading details the current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Policies and Procedures for the conduct of business	LGSC Standing Orders for conduct of meetings Management Statement (currently with the Department of the Environment for approval) Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) Service Level Agreement with the Local Government Training Group	Standing Orders Management Statement MOU with NILGA SLA with Training Group www.lgsc.org.uk
Policies and Procedures for the provision of services	Policy on Health & Safety at Work Equality Scheme LGSC Equal Opportunities Policy	Policy on Health & Safety at Work Equality Scheme LGSC Equal Opportunities Policy www.lgsc.org.uk

7.5 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)

This heading details the current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission’s Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Policies and procedures for the recruitment and employment of staff	How the Commission recruits staff	Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection www.lgsc.org.uk
Customer Service	Publication Scheme Data Protection Policy	Publication Scheme Data Protection Policy www.lgsc.org.uk
Records Management	Publication Scheme Data Protection Policy Retention and Disposal Schedule	Publication Scheme www.lgsc.org.uk
Charging Regime	How the Commission charges for services and requests for information.	Appendix 1 of Publication Scheme

7.6 LISTS AND REGISTERS

This details information relating to lists and registers held by the Commission.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission's Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Public Registers and registers held as public record	The Commission does not hold this information	
Asset Register	Details of the Commissions general assets	Annual Report and Accounts www.lgsc.org.uk
Disclosure logs	The Commission keeps copies of all requests made for information Register of Gifts and Hospitality provided to Members and Senior Officers	Register of Gifts and Hospitality Form www.lgsc.org.uk

7.7 THE SERVICES WE OFFER

This section details information relating to the services currently provided by the Commission.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Commission's Charging Structure for Published Information (see Appendix 1).

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications
Other relevant information pertaining to the Commission	HR Standards assessment for councils Stress Management Toolkit.	HR Standards Stress Management Toolkit www.lgsc.org.uk
Other relevant information pertaining to the Commission	Information relating to the Review of Public Administration and Local Government Modernisation	LGSC Responses to RPA Consultations LGSC papers pertaining to Local Government modernisation www.lgsc.org.uk
Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services (NIJC)	The NIJC is the negotiating body for all staff in councils in Northern Ireland (except Chief Executives). The Commission provide the independent secretariat to the NIJC	www.lgsc.org.uk/NIJC
Local Government Training Group (LGTG)	Its role is to assist the district councils in Northern Ireland to identify and address training and development needs	www.lgsc.org.uk/LGT-group

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Charging Structure

for Requests for Information

under the Commission's Publication Scheme

Charging Structure for Requests for Information under the Commission's Publication Scheme

Section 4 of this Scheme outlined the four main categories for charging for Published Information under the Act. These are: Free of Charge; Priced Publications; Photocopying & Administrative Charges; Professional Charges. This document provides further information on the current charging structure which will be applied.

Free of Charge:

Information which is generally published or available free of charge on the Commission's website is categorised as free of charge (ie there is no charge by the Commission, although the applicant would have to meet any charges by their internet service provider, telephone charges, personal printing costs, etc).

For those without Internet access, a single print-out as on the website would be available by post from the Office Manager, Local Government Staff Commission for NI, Commission House, 18-22 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG, Tel: 028 9031 3200, Fax: 028 9031 3151, Typetalk: 18001 028 9031 3200 or email: info@lgsc.org.uk.

Priced Publications:

Where the Commission publishes books, reports, other bound documents, CD-ROM's, DVD's, videos or other media which have been priced for sale, then the published price will apply. An up to date list including prices and where they can be purchased is included in Appendix A. This schedule will be regularly updated.

Photocopying and Administrative Costs:

While much information will be available free of charge, requests for multiple print-outs, or for archived copies of documents which are no longer available or on the web, will attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopy, postage, etc.

Also, where information is free of charge to view at Commission offices or other locations but a standard photocopy or certified copy is requested a charge will be made. The charges are as follows:

Photocopy charges (A4)	1-10 copies	25p each
	11-25 copies	20p each
	26-50 copies	15p each
	50+ copies	12p each
• Certified copy charges	per A4 page	£2.50 each
• Administrative/ information retrieval time		£12.50 per hour
• Postage and packing		at cost

A minimum charge of £5 will apply.

The Commission will advise the applicant of any such charges at the time of the request. The charges will be payable in advance.

Professional Charges:

In exceptional circumstances, the Commission may have to employ external specialists or other professionals to gather and prepare information to meet a specific request. A written estimate, to include time and materials spent by Commission staff, will be provided detailing the cost of providing such information. The Commission will then aim to provide the information within a target of 20 days although this may be extended by up to 3 months. All costs will have to be paid in advance.

In all the above cases, VAT is not payable.

NOTE: The Commission has the discretion to waive any costs in relation to publications.

Publications List - 'Free of Charge'

Available at Commission Offices or on request by post.

Title:	Date Available:	Available from
Any documents on the website	Now	www.lgsc.org.uk
Equality Scheme	Now	Commission Offices www.lgsc.org.uk

Publications List - 'Chargeable'

Available at Commission Offices or on request by post.

Title:	Date Published:	Price:
Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection – hard copy	June 2003 revised 2008	£100
LGSC HR Standards	Nov 2005	£100
Current Annual Report	Nov 2008	£5
Current Business and Corporate Plan	Apr 2008	£5
Code of Practice for Commission Members	Nov 2002	£5
Code of Conduct for Staff Commission Employees	Nov 2002	£5
Model Equal Opportunities Policy	Nov 2002	£5
Model Harassment Policy	Nov 2002	£5
Service Level Agreement LGTG and LGSC	Nov 2002	£5
Constitution of LGTG	Nov 2002	£5
Staff Training and Development Strategy	Nov 2002	£5
Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees	Nov 2002	£5
Guidelines on handling cases of redundancy, capability and discipline in respect of Chief Executives in Northern Ireland	Nov 2002	£5
Model Scheme for Managing Attendance in Local Government in Northern Ireland	Nov 2002	£5
Guidance on the staffing implications of organisational development and change	Nov 2002	£5
Local Government Staff Commission News	Nov 2002	£5

Monitoring and Review

This Publication Scheme and the Charging Structure will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated.