

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – A GUIDE TO CHARGING FEES

1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Section 9 of the FOIA allows a public authority to charge a fee for providing information in response to a request.

The fees are based on the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

This guide deals with the following questions:

1. What can the College charge for the supply of information requested under FOI?
2. Can the College refuse to supply on cost grounds?

What the College charges depends on NWRC policy and practice in accordance with the parameters set by the Act.

2. When determining charges the following should be considered:

Estimate the cost of the following activities:

- Determining whether the information is held
- Locating and retrieval
- Extracting the information and editing

In order to achieve consistency, all public authorities use the same hourly rate when estimating staff-time costs. The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour by Regulation 4(4) of the Fees Regulations, to the maximum charge of £450.

3. Cost Limits

If the College estimates that the limit of £450 will be exceeded there is no obligation to comply with the request.

The College will inform the applicant by way of a refusal notice.

