



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Proactive publication of official information

The Publication Scheme Development and Maintenance Initiative (DMI)

In 2005 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) reviewed the effectiveness of publication schemes. The outcomes of this review highlighted the need to develop and improve the proactive dissemination of public sector information.

The review identified the need for:

- consistent approaches to the inclusion of information;
- a requirement for improvements to the maintenance of schemes and
- further awareness-raising of the general public regarding information which is readily available and how to access it.

Previously, our approval of publication schemes expired four years after the date of approval. We have now decided to extend that to 2008. During this period we want to help public authorities improve and advance their schemes through our Development and Maintenance Initiative (DMI).

Objective

To encourage and help public authorities to improve and expand publication schemes through:

- proactively disseminating information;
- consistently making information available and
- providing uncomplicated and swift access to the information they routinely make available.

Aims

- To develop a list of core classes for all public sector bodies.
- To produce a comprehensive guide specific to each public authority sector.
- To progress all sectors towards a culture of maximum release and a form of model scheme to enable a consistency of core classes across public authorities.
- To identify and disseminate good practice, in relation maintaining publication schemes.
- To direct and support public authorities to creatively consider how to promote and publish the information they make readily available.



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How will the ICO achieve its aims?

Fact finding

In the first instance we hope to collect and collate opinions, ideas and assertions regarding the content, maintenance and dissemination of publication schemes from professionals, practitioners and users.

We will use this information to inform debate regarding necessary changes.

Workshops

Following the fact finding, work will begin with sector practitioners and representative bodies to develop core classes, maintenance regimes and dissemination methods. We expect that each group will meet on five occasions (4.5 days work) and these events will be spread over a six-month period. The planned timetable for each sector is in Annexe 1. Some networking groups already exist and where this is the case we would hope to make use of these networks, however we recognise that in some areas we will need to bring together the relevant parties.

Sector-specific guides

The output of the workshops will be published as a sector-specific publication scheme guide. It will contain the core classes required for approval and good practice tips on dissemination, maintenance, training, promotion and review.

The role of the advisory panel

We will also enrol an advisory panel made up of experts and interested parties. This group will provide a 'sounding board' for ideas and bring a user perspective to the work as it develops, providing feedback when appropriate. Generally communication will be by e-mail, however, we hope the panel will meet three times during the 16-month project period.

Call for volunteers – fact finding

Do you have an opinion on publication schemes? Can you see how they could be improved? Can you provide feedback, ideas or general comments? If so, we would like to hear from you whether you are a freedom of information professional, an interested party or member of the public - your views matter. Please send us your comments on central government and local government schemes by 4 December 2006. For other sectors, please see the timetable in Annex 1.

Please send all comments to paul.damerill@ico.gsi.gov.uk



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Call for volunteers – workshops

Are you a FOIA practitioner or representative body? Would you like to take part in our workshops? Spaces will be limited so apply early.

Before you volunteer - please make sure you can spare the time. You will need to cover the costs of attending the workshops.

To volunteer for the workshops – please indicate which sector group you would like to attend (see Annex 2) and send your contact details to

paul.damerill@ico.gsi.gov.uk