



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

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

Date: 26 August 2008

#### **Public authorities urged to move towards greater transparency**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is calling on public authorities to become more transparent by proactively disclosing official information. This comes as the ICO launches its new [model publication scheme](#) for public authorities.

As part of the work to increase transparency in the public sector, the ICO has produced [specific guidance](#) outlining the types of information which it expects public authorities to regularly disclose, such as details of organisational structure and financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure.

Working closely with public authorities, the ICO has designed the new model publication scheme with the aim of helping authorities to create a culture of proactive disclosure across the public sector. The model scheme has been designed so that it can be easily adopted by any authority.

Graham Smith, Deputy Commissioner at the ICO, said, "Since its introduction, the Freedom of Information Act has changed expectations of transparency in the public sector, leading to the disclosure of a significant amount of information that would otherwise have remained secret. Openness and transparency can improve public trust and confidence in public authorities. We are encouraging authorities to adopt the new model publication scheme as a way of ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and making transparency the norm."

ICO approval of current schemes expires at the end of this year, and all public authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland should adopt the new scheme by 1 January 2009.

Further details about publication schemes can be found on the ICO website – [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

A supporting leaflet, [FOI is changing, are you ready?](#) is available at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)
3. The revised model publication scheme was created using feedback collected from a cross-section of those who use or work with publication schemes, from freedom of information practitioners to members of the public. A series of sector-specific workshops held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were attended by representatives from central and local government, police, health and education.