



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

Press Release

23 February 2009

ICO calls for senior salary scales to be published

Senior public officials' salary bands should be publicly available as a matter of routine, according to new Guidance published today by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Guidance, [*When should salaries be disclosed?*](#), explains that salary details, bonuses and performance related pay should be in the public domain to the nearest £5,000 band when there is a legitimate public interest. Disclosing exact salaries will only be required in exceptional circumstances.

Gerrard Tracey, Assistant Information Commissioner, said: "Those who are paid from the public purse should expect information on their salaries to be made public. There is a legitimate public interest in knowing how public money is spent, how public sector salaries compare with those in other areas, and how money is distributed between different levels of staff. Organisations can best meet these interests by routinely disclosing senior salary scales as an integral part of their publication schemes."

The guidance also includes information to help authorities decide whether exact salaries should be disclosed and notes that authorities need to consider that allegations of corruption or mismanagement, or situations in which senior staff set their own pay, will mean that disclosure is more likely. More senior staff, responsible for major policy and financial initiatives, can expect greater scrutiny of their pay than more junior employees. The Guidance notes that it will nearly always be unfair to disclose junior employees' exact salaries.

The guidance is part of a series produced to help public authorities understand their obligations and to promote good practice under the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations. A training DVD *Tick tock* is also available for public authorities dealing with requests under the Freedom of Information Act and EIR. The Guidance and [Tick tock](#) can be downloaded at www.ico.gov.uk or ordered by contacting the ICO on 08456 306 060.

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If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: 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
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.