

This is the Publication Scheme for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

which covers Shropshire geographical area.

Our full title and address for sending any documents is: *Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, Brigade Headquarters, St Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HJ.*

The senior officer responsible for maintenance of this scheme is: *Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.*

1. Introduction: what a publication scheme is and why it has been developed

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public. To do this they must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

- *The classes of information which they publish or intend to publish;*
- *The manner in which the information will be published; and*
- *Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.*

The Authority's publication scheme consists of information already published and held by the Authority or information which is to be published in the future. That means that all information in our publication scheme is either available for you on our website to download and print off or available in traditional document form. Information within the publication scheme will be available either free or at a charge – we explain which is free or which will be provided at a charge later in this scheme.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example information about national security or court records.

2. Classes of information published by the Authority

The publication scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future – this is split into ‘classes’ of information.

The ‘classes’ of information currently published are contained in section 4 of this Scheme. Details of how the information is or will be published and any fees charged for information contained in the publication scheme are set out in the same section.

The classes in the scheme are based on our departmental functions. Under each heading there is a list of the information which we publish which relates to that function.

For example, information under the heading of ‘personnel’ includes recruitment, training, discipline policies and so on.

3. What we do: Functions of the Fire Authority and Fire & Rescue Service in Shropshire

The Authority is responsible for carrying out the duties required by the Fire Services Act 1947. These include:

- securing the services of a fire brigade for its area;
- securing the efficient training of its fire fighters;
- making sure arrangements are in place to receive calls and summon members of the fire brigade;
- gathering information on the character of buildings and water supplies;
- securing arrangements to alleviate damage to property in the course of firefighting;
- giving fire safety advice; and
- enforcing laws providing for fire safety within its area.

The Authority sets the fire authority's annual budget and the cost of carrying out its duties are met partly by council tax in each council area and partly by government grant and business rates.

The Authority also carries out other functions, such as rescue services or attending non-fire incidents. These include:

- rescuing trapped and/or injured people where no fire is involved e.g. at road accidents;
- dealing with spillages and accidental release of substances endangering life or the environment e.g. chemical or toxic substances inadvertently released; and
- responding to extreme weather conditions e.g. pumping water from flooded property (for information about this see under Rescue Services below)

As part of its duties laid down in the Fire Services Act 1947, the Authority provides fire advice in the community. This means educating the public about fire safety.

The Authority was established in 1998 following local government reorganisation. Shropshire County Council and Borough of Telford and Wrekin are the Councils responsible for the Authority but are independent from it. Representative members of each Council sit on the Authority which then oversees the Fire Brigade's finances, strategies and operations.

4. Classes of Information Currently Published

Format of Information	<p>All information is available in hard copy. The information identified in this publication scheme will gradually be available from the website. Some information is also available in other languages or on audio cassette. Copyright documents provided to the service cannot be photocopied.</p>
Availability and Cost	<p>Please apply in the first instance to:</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Brigade Headquarters, St Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HJ. Telephone 01743 260200</p> <p>Provision of information will be charged at 10 pence per A4 sheet</p> <p>Website address - www.shropshire.fire-uk.org</p>

Class	Sub-Heading	Format of Information	Availability and Cost
Operational – fire fighting and rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies / Procedures Manuals <i>e.g. major incident plans</i> • Fire Cover/Areas • Vehicles/Appliances • Equipment • Special Services <i>e.g. pumping out flooded premises</i> 	<p>Brochures and internal documents</p> <p>Maps / Plans (unless copyright)</p> <p>Leaflets</p>	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet

Class	Sub-Heading	Format of Information	Availability and Cost
Personnel * and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Terms and Conditions • Discipline Procedure • Staff Appraisal Policy • Statistics • Equal Opportunities • Training Strategy • Pension information 	<p>Application Forms</p> <p>Documents and Leaflets</p> <p>Visit ODPM / Fire Website at paragraph 5</p>	<p>Brigade Headquarters</p> <p>Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet</p>
Occupational Health and Safety – <i>advice to Staff and public on Fire related issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Health Advice • Risk Assessment –<i>evaluating risks to people</i> 	<p>Leaflets</p> <p>Tables</p>	<p>Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet</p>
Managing the Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on Management • Policies and Procedures • Brigade Structure 	<p>Official Publications</p>	<p>Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet</p>
Plans and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Best Value Plans • Strategies <i>e.g. Community Fire Safety</i> • Service Orders <i>e.g. dealing with burning vehicles</i> • Service Plans 	<p>Authority Reports</p> <p>Brochures</p>	<p>Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet</p>

Class	Sub-Heading	Format of Information	Availability and Cost
Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget • Financial Summary • Annual Statement of Accounts from 1998/99 	Authority Reports	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet
Premises (locations of stations etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Stations • Training Centres • Headquarters 	Tables and Plans	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet
Purchasing and Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Statement – <i>purchasing strategy</i> • Protective Clothing • Operational Equipment • Vehicles, Appliances and Cars • Smoke Alarms 	Documents and Leaflets	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet
Information and Communication Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment: Software and Hardware • Policies & Strategies - <i>e.g. the Implementing Electronic Government Statement</i> • Technical Specifications • IT Development • Communications Development • Collaborative Projects <i>e.g. Radio Strategy Project</i> <i>www.firelink.org.uk</i> 	Documents and Leaflets	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet

Class	Sub-Heading	Format of Information	Availability and Cost
Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News/Press Releases • Incidents of interest • Complaints Procedure 	Leaflets	Generally free
Fire Safety: Community Fire Safety Technical Fire Safety and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Fire Safety Plan – how we promote Fire Safety • Fire Safety at Home and Community • Fire Safety for Schools/Children • Statistics • Fire Safety Campaign • Youth Initiatives • Commercial Fire Safety • Policy and Procedure • Guidance • Statistics 	Leaflets Brochures Posters Stickers Manuals Documents	Generally free Internal documents 10 pence per A4 sheet
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Value Indicators • BV Performance Plans and Reviews • Statistics • Audit Reports • HM Fire Service Inspectorate Reports • Performance Management 	Reports and Documents Visit ODPM / Fire website at paragraph 5	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet

Class	Sub-Heading	Format of Information	Availability and Cost
Committees & Partnerships *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Authority • Premises • Management Board (<i>from Feb 2003</i>) • Equal Opportunities • Local Partnership Agreements <i>e.g. smoke alarms</i> • 	Agendas/ Open Reports and Minutes Reports Brochures	Cost – 10 pence per A4 sheet

* Some information might be confidential or exempt from publication by law. We cannot, therefore, publish this.

- ***Information available on our website***

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority maintains a website at www.shropshirefire.gov.uk and has an ongoing commitment to make as much information available on the website as possible, including that listed above.

5. Other Useful Website Addresses

The information you are looking for may also be available from the following organisations or on their websites. The websites listed below are an excellent source of information and, if the documents are downloaded or printed off by the enquirer, they provide a quick response at little cost.

The Authority, however, takes no responsibility nor warrants the accuracy of information contained on the following sites:

- Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA) - www.fire-uk.org
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
 - *Fire Health and Safety Directorate*
 - *Fire Research Division*
 - *Fire Policy Division*
 - *Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate*
 - www.odpm.gov.uk/fire
- UK Online Government – www.ukonline.gov.uk
- Local Government Association (LGA) - www.lga.gov.uk
- FireNet International (an independent, non-government website) – www.fire.org.uk

6. Making an application for other Information to the Authority

As well as being able to access information, which is publicly available under the Publication Scheme, we shall answer queries under the existing Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. This allows you to write and ask us to supply you with specific information.

You can also apply for a copy of the personal data we hold about you under the Data Protection Act 1998 - that is information relating to an applicant that has arisen through their employment with the Authority or information obtained about an individual through the Authority's statutory functions. There is a fee of £10 and you should contact the Authority's Data Protection Officer on 01743 260200 or in writing to the address at the head of this document.

7. Applications for information after January 2005 under FOIA

After January 2005 you will be able to ask the Authority for information, which is not already published elsewhere nor exempt under the FOIA. Under the FOIA you will have the right to ask for information to be provided in a particular way and we shall try to meet your request. You will be able to ask for assistance, if you have any difficulty in formulating or making an application, by contacting the Authority's Information Officer.

We shall help you as much as possible but we are not required to look for the information you request unless we have:

- a clear and understandable request with enough detail to locate the information;
- your name and address so we can respond to your request; and
- an indication about the form in which you want the information.

This will ensure that your application is dealt with as quickly as possible. You should give as much detail as you can in order to assist us in locating the information that you require. Some documents may include exempt information, so you will only get the information, which is not exempt. You only have a right to information and not necessarily to documents. Some documents may include exempt information, so you will only get the information from them, which is not exempt.

Any fee charged will be calculated by looking at the costs directly and reasonably incurred locating the information you have asked for and giving it to you. You will then be sent a 'fees notice', which you will have to pay within three months of your request – you will not receive information until you have paid the costs in the fees notice.

If the estimated cost of providing the information would be above the appropriate limit set by the government then we shall not be under a duty to provide the information. The Authority will, however, inform you, if the limit will be exceeded, and we shall try to let you know what can be provided within the limit. Despite not being obliged to provide information, which exceeds the limit, the Authority will still be under a duty to advise and assist.

In order to protect the Authority there will be rules, which govern multiple applications for information, which are clearly trying to avoid the financial limits set by the government. We shall, however, try to help you as much as possible to get the information you want.

8. Complaints and Feedback

If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance, please contact the Chief Fire Officer, contact details for whom are provided at the head of this document. If you need to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to the Brigade's Complaints Officer. The telephone number is 01743 260200 and the address is provided at the head of this document.

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get from the Authority or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made, then this should be addressed to the office of the Information Commissioner. This is the organisation, which ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745

E Mail: data@dataprotection.gov.uk.

*This document will be made available in other languages
or on audio cassette upon request.*

Explanatory Notes on Model Publication Scheme for Fire Authorities

The model publication scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner for:

- A fire authority constituted by a combination scheme under section 5 or 6 of the Fire Services Act 1947.
- A joint fire authority established under Part IV of the Local Government Act 1985.
- The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- A joint fire authority established by virtue of an order under section 42(2) of the Local Government Act 1985.

These notes are aimed to help you when deciding whether the model scheme is appropriate for your organisation and will explain the steps you need to take in order to adopt the scheme. Having adopted the model scheme your organisation will then be obliged to publish the information set out in it.

The model scheme was developed and submitted by the Fire Lawyers' Network.

Contact: David Cutting, Solicitor, South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority, 18, Regent Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2PQ.
Telephone: 01226 772855.

Is the Model Scheme appropriate for your organisation?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 defines the public authorities that are covered by the Act and so are required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. The types of fire authorities listed above are all identified in Schedule 1, Part II of the Act as public authorities covered by the Act. It is for these fire authorities that this model scheme has been prepared. It is your responsibility to check whether your organisation falls within any one of these definitions.

Although all such fire authorities are required to adopt a publication scheme, they are not obliged to adopt the model publication scheme. It is anticipated that this model scheme will cover most of the core functions undertaken by a fire authority. However if you wish to, you may submit a bespoke scheme for approval by the Commissioner, which better caters for your organisation's individual circumstances. If you decide you would prefer to submit a bespoke scheme, you should follow the procedure detailed in the Commissioner's booklet; Publication Schemes – Approval Documentation, which you should already have received. This booklet is also available from our website.

The Model Scheme

The model scheme has been developed in a way that should allow a fire service simply to insert its own details into the appropriate places, as indicated by the bold text in capital letters contained in square brackets.

The Classes of information.

Section 4 of the model scheme presents the classes of information to be published in the form of a table. Included in the table are details of what format the information will be published in, how the information can be obtained and whether it will be provided free-of-charge or for a fee.

The left hand column of the table gives the general class heading, whilst the next column contains the definition, detailing the sort of information intended to be included in that class. The third column informs users how the information will be presented and the final column provides details of how to obtain the information. The final column also indicates whether a charge will be made for the information.

Optional documents and classes

The model scheme recognises that there are some variations in the services provided by different fire authorities, for example not all services will have a fire fighting at sea function. Within most of the classes there are optional documents listed under the second column in order to accommodate these variations. These are shown in bold text.

There are also two optional classes, one of which relates to those functions unique to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and one relating to those services, which either operate a museum or provide information on the history of the brigade to the public.

How do you select the optional documents and classes?

The Commissioner needs to be aware of which, if any, of these optional documents or classes a fire authority has selected. You should, therefore, submit a completed copy of the model scheme with all the appropriate contact details etc. of your fire authority, showing the options selected.

We will acknowledge receipt of your submission and then, later, the Commissioner will advise you formally when your declaration has been accepted.

What will adopting the model publication scheme commit a fire authority to do?

Simply submitting a completed copy of the model scheme does not in itself fulfil a fire service's obligations under the Act in relation to publication schemes. A public authority has to make its publication scheme available and publish information in accordance with that scheme. By adopting the model scheme, your organisation is committing itself to publishing the information described by the classes that you have selected.

As new information is produced, which falls within a class definition, it should be prepared for publication and made available.

How should the information be made available?

The scheme provides scope for a fire service to publish information in a variety of ways. It is anticipated that a lot of information could be made available on the authority's own website. Other information may only be available on request from the appropriate person. There is also the option of making copies of information available through local libraries.

We are very aware that not all people have access to the internet for a variety of reasons. Even where information is available on a website, therefore, the Commissioner would still expect hard copies to be made available.

The Freedom of Information Act aims to develop a culture of openness amongst public authorities. Fire authorities should raise awareness of the existence and contents of the scheme it adopts to the general public.

Fees

A fire authority may choose to charge for the information it is making available. It is sufficient for the purposes of this Office, that you simply indicate whether any of the information contained in a class is to be made available free-of-charge or not. For example, it is likely that all the information made available under the Public Relations class will be free. This can be indicated by simply putting "**Cost – Free**" in the fourth column. If, however, any newsletters produced would be charged for, then the column should be completed by entering "**Cost - £**" to indicate some of the information in that class would be charged for. It is not necessary, for our purposes, to state the actual price of the newsletter.

The Duration of the Model Scheme

All publication schemes, including model schemes, will be approved for a specified period. This will generally be 4 years. The Commissioner will advise you whether your organisation's adoption of the model scheme has been accepted. At that time you will also be informed of the date the approval of your model scheme will expire.

Further Help and Assistance

For further information about the way in which this model scheme was developed or its contents please contact Dave Cutting of the Fire Lawyers Network.

Queries about the submission process and subsequent operation of the scheme once adopted should be addressed to the F.O.I team at the Information Commissioner's Office.