

Useful website addresses:

www.foi-uk.org

www.foi.nhs.uk

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

The Freedom of Information Act covers every public authority and places a legal requirement on them to be open so you can have greater access to the decisions made about your public services.

From January 2005:

As a member of the public you will have the right to see or ask to see a wide range of information about almost every aspect of all public bodies including NHS organisations. You will be able to see much of the information on the Internet. Information which is not on the Internet you will be able to ask for, in writing, and we will respond within 20 working days.

How do I know which Publication Scheme to look at to get the information I want?

The Gloucestershire Health Community works very closely together so sometimes you may need to look at more than one Trust's publication scheme to get the information you want.

All of these can be found via www.gloshealth.services.org.uk

The NHS Organisations in Gloucestershire are:

Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Primary Care Trust
Publication Scheme Co-ordinator,
Unit 43 Central Way, Arle Road,
Cheltenham, GL51 8LX.

Cotswold and Vale Primary Care Trust
Publication Scheme Co-ordinator, Trust HQ,
Cirencester Hospital, Tetbury Road,
Cirencester, GL7 1UY.

Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust
Finance Department, Gloucestershire
Ambulance Service, Gloucestershire TriService
Emergency Centre, Waterwells Drive,
Quedgley, Gloucester, GL2 2BA.

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust
Publication Scheme Co-ordinator,
Clinical Projects Office, Gloucestershire
Royal Hospital, Great Western Road,
Gloucester, GL1 3NN.

The Gloucestershire Partnership Trust
Publication Scheme Co-ordinator,
Trust HQ, Rikenel, Montpellier,
Gloucester, GL1 1LY.

**West Gloucestershire
Primary Care Trust**
Publication Scheme Manager, PCT
Headquarters, Unit 14, Highnam
Business Centre, Newent Road,
Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8DN.

To access information relating to a particular GP surgery please contact the Practice Manager direct.



Gloucestershire Health Services

An introduction to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- "Health Services in Gloucestershire are committed to being open and transparent organisations who embrace the Freedom of Information Act 2000."
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What is the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and what does it mean?

The Act was passed on 30 November 2000. Its purpose is to give everyone greater rights of access to information about how public authorities work. This means you will be able to ask to see almost all information held by public authorities.

It is being implemented in two phases - October 2003 and January 2005:

From October 2003:

All health organisations in Gloucestershire, including GP surgeries, will provide a **Publication Scheme**, which lists the information that is currently available to the public e.g. Minutes of Board meetings, Annual Reports and policies.

How will I be able to do this?

From October 2003 you will be able to look at the **Publication Schemes** for all of the NHS organisations in Gloucestershire. The **Publication Schemes** will be divided into categories, known as **Classes**, to make them easier to understand and where possible will direct you straight to the information you need.

Where can I find the Publication Schemes?

Publication Schemes will be published on the Internet allowing you to download the information you want directly.

If you do not have access to the Internet you will be able to look at a copy in local libraries, hospital libraries and at local GP surgeries. You can also contact any of the Publication Scheme Co-ordinators directly for further information. (contact details at the end of this leaflet)

How do I get the information I want?

By looking on the Internet or by writing to the FOI Publication Scheme Co-ordinator for each organisation or surgery.

Details of how to obtain the information or documents you want will also be included in the **Publication Schemes**.

Is there any information I will not be able to see?

We have to take into account that some of the material may have to be exempt from disclosure. This is because of legislation such as the Data Protection Act 1998 which protects information identifying an individual.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you are entitled to access health records and any other personal information that is held about you.

For more information see:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

What if the information you want isn't on the Publication Scheme?

The local health community operates a **Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS** which aims to ensure that people have access to available information about the services provided by the NHS. People can request information from their local Hospital or Primary Care Trust or the Gloucestershire Partnership Trust.

When **Individual Rights of Access** are implemented in January 2005 you will be able to ask about any information and, subject to exemptions, you will have a right to be told if that information exists and if you have a right to see it.