

## professional development portfolio

# Freedom of Information

Anyone working for a public authority or company wholly owned by a public authority needs to understand the Freedom of Information Act 2000. They need to know how and when they must respond when individuals request the information that is held about them.

This course enables learners to understand the legal responsibilities, the policies and procedures that need to be followed and how to put them into practice. It shows what is meant by "access to information", what the law says and what needs to be done to comply. The decision making process is explained as well as the rules, how to manage confidential information and what all of this means for your organisation.

**Freedom of Information** enables the learner to understand:

- The rights the public has to apply for information so that requests can be responded to appropriately and efficiently
- When and how requests need to be logged
- What action needs to be taken to promote good records and information management
- What policies need to be put in place, why and how to implement them
- How to comply with the law and continue to provide services effectively to the public



### Learning outcomes

#### What the law says

- What is "Access to Information"?
- Who does the Freedom of Information Act apply to?
- What rights do people have to access information?
- When does FOI apply?
- What is a Publication Scheme?

#### Duties and obligations

- What rights does an applicant have to see the information requested?
- What happens if an applicant is not clear about the information they want?
- What limitations are there on what applicants can ask for?

#### Decision making

- What rules do we have to work within?
- What kind of information is covered by exemptions?
- What about personal information?
- What about commercial information given in confidence?
- What happens if we disclose confidential information?
- What powers does the Information Commissioner have?
- What is the ultimate sanction for non compliance with FOI Act?

#### Policies and procedures

- Do we have to log all our requests and if so how?
- What help is available to ensure best practice?
- What if the way we manage our information is not very good?

#### Target audience

The Freedom of Information Act affects everyone in a public authority. This course is relevant for staff at all levels.

**See also:** *Managing Workload, Negotiation Skills, Managing Relationships, Networking Skills, Managing Your Behaviour at Work, Project Management, Problem Solving, Managing High Performing Teams.*