

MUSEUM OF THE HOME

Freedom of Information Policy

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 came into force on 1 January 2005 and introduced a public 'right to know' in relation to public bodies. For the purposes of the Act, the Museum of the Home is classified as a public authority.

This policy explains what information the Museum makes available to the public, how to make a FOI request, and guidance for Museum staff on handling a FOI request.

Information publicly available

The FOIA also requires a public authority to draw up and maintain a publication scheme, which is a guide to the information which is publicly available. This is a means by which a large amount of commonly and frequently accessed information is made available without the need for special individual requests. The information about the Museum of the Home which is publicly available can be found on our website www.museumofthehome.org.uk

Making an FOI request

The FOIA gives anyone the right to access recorded information held by public sector organisations.

Anyone can request information – there are no restrictions on age, nationality or where someone lives. The Act gives applicants two related rights:

- The right to be told whether the information exists;
- The right to receive the information, where possible in the manner requested.

A request will be handled under different regulations depending on the kind of information asked for, such as the:

- Data Protection Act if the applicant asks for information an organisation holds about themselves;
- Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) if the applicant asks for environmental information.

FOIA requests should be made in writing (either by letter or by email) and the applicant must receive a written reply within 20 working days. This reply must:

- Either give the information or indicate that it will be sent in full within the 20-day time period;
- Or state the grounds for withholding this information.

FOI requests should be sent to:

Director of Strategy and Finance
Museum of the Home
Geffrye Almshouses
136 Kingsland Road
London, E2 8EA

The Museum will normally respond to requests for information free of charge. However, the Museum may charge a fee, or refuse to answer the request, where the staff time required to process it would be more than 18 hours. The cost of providing a significant number of photocopies will be charged for. Payment of fees and costs of photocopying must be received in advance; during the period that the Museum is waiting for payment of its invoice the 20-day response deadline is suspended.

The Museum may refuse a request if access to the information is prohibited under one of the exemptions of the Act. There are specific and complex rules relating to the grounds on which information can be withheld and in certain cases, responsibility for deciding whether the Museum might claim exemption from disclosure rests ultimately with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Complaints procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response they have had from the Museum, they should write to the Director.

The Director can be contacted at:

Director
Museum of the Home
136 Kingsland Road
London E2 8EA

If, after an internal review has been carried out, an applicant is still dissatisfied or they consider that a request has been wrongly rejected, they may apply to the Information Commissioner, who has the power to order disclosure. The Information Commissioner's office is an independent body, set up to promote access to official information and to protect personal information.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Tel: +44 (0)1625 545700