

Better Homes, Brighter Futures



Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme

**Wigan and Leigh Housing
Guidance on Publication Schemes,
Classes of Information and Guidance
to Information**

January 2009



This information can also be made available in large print. Please telephone 01942 486500 for more information.

People with hearing difficulties who have a Minicom can contact us through the typetalk operator by putting 18001 01942 in front of any of our telephone numbers. We can also be contacted by sending a mobile phone text to our contact centre on 07797 806546.



The following phrases say:	If you do not read or speak English and need help understanding this information please ring our language line and we will speak to you through an interpreter.
عربي	إذا كنت لا تقرأ أو تتكلم بالإنجليزية وتحتاج إلى أن تفهم هذه المعلومات فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على خط اللغة رقم 01942 488430 لكي نحادثك بمساعدة مترجم.
廣東話	如果您看不懂英語或不會說英語，而需要幫助瞭解這些資訊，請打我們的語言專線 01942 488431，我們會通過口譯人員跟您交談。
فارسی	اگر به زبان انگلیسی صحبت نمی کنید یا قادر به خواندن متون زبان انگلیسی نیستید و برای درک این اطلاعات نیاز به کمک دارید، لطفاً با خط تلفن زبان ما در شماره 01942 488432 تماس بگیرید تا شما را به یک مترجم ارتباط دهیم.
Français	Si vous ne comprenez pas ou ne parlez pas l'Anglais et avez besoin d'aide pour comprendre ces informations, veuillez contacter notre service Linguistique en Ligne (<i>Language Line</i>) au 01942 488433 et nous communiquerons avec vous à l'aide d'un interprète.
ગુજરાતી	જો તમને અંગ્રેજી ભાષા વાંચતા કે બોલતા ન આવડતી હોય અને આ માહિતી સમજવા માટે તમારે મદદ જોતી હોય તો કૃપા કરી અમારી ભાષા માટેનો લેંગ્વેજ લાઇન 01942 488434 પર ફોન કરો અને અમે તમારી સાથે એક દુભાષિયા દ્વારા વાત કરીશું.
اردو	اگر آپ انگریزی پڑھتے یا بولتے نہیں ہیں اور ان معلومات کو سمجھنے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو برائے مہربانی ہماری لینگویج لائن کو 01942 488435 پر فون کریں تاکہ ہم آپ سے کسی ترجمان کی مدد سے گفتگو کریں۔

In implementing the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Wigan and Leigh Housing promotes an understanding of the work undertaken within the organisation to foster a spirit of trust with the public and other organisations. We aim to achieve this by promoting transparency in the way we make our decisions and by providing clear information about our policies and processes through our publication scheme. We will deal with individual requests for information courteously and promptly and provide advice and assistance if necessary.

What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It lists exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.

The Act came into force in two stages:-

- The first stage was in 2004 when Wigan and Leigh Housing adopted a Publication Scheme
- The second stage came into force in January 2005. Any person now making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and if they do, be supplied with that information. This is subject to a number of exemptions listed in the Act.

What is a Publication Scheme?

A Publication Scheme is a guide to the classes of information that Wigan and Leigh Housing publishes or intends to publish routinely. The term “published” is broad and is not limited to information produced in paper forms. As far as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is concerned, information made publicly available has been published. Therefore, information on the Wigan and Leigh Housing website is as much part of the Publication Scheme as printed documents.

What are classes of information?

A requirement of the Act is to specify “classes” of information that Wigan and Leigh Housing will publish within its Publication Scheme.

The Information Commissioner has issued a ‘**Model Publication Scheme**’ and from 1ST January 2009 Wigan and Leigh Housing has adopted the ‘Model Scheme’.

The Model Scheme contains 7 classes of information and these are as follows: -

- **Who we are and what we do**
- **What we spend and how we spend it**
- **What our priorities are and how we are doing**

- **How we make decisions**
- **Our policies and procedures**
- **Lists and registers**
- **The services we offer**

Examples of the type of information available are given below under the **Guide to Information**.

By adopting the Information Commissioner's 'Model Scheme' Wigan and Leigh Housing is committed to the following: -

- To proactively publish information (including environmental information which is held by it and contained within each class).
- To provide a means by which the organisation can ensure the public are aware of the sorts of the information they have committed to make readily available, how they can access and whether they will have to pay for it.
- To review and update the information on a regular basis and in accordance with The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Publication Scheme Review Guidance.

How will I request additional information not covered by this scheme?

Wigan and Leigh Housing includes as much information in the Publication Scheme as it can. However, if you cannot find what you are looking for, you can make a request for the information.

The Act is retrospective and information requests can be for information created before the Act came fully in to force in 2005. However, where any of the information comes within an exempt category either under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or other relevant legislation, it will be published with the exempt material deleted.

Will I be charged for information?

Material which is published and accessed on the website can be downloaded free of charge though its further reproduction may be subject to copyright - see later section. Some information may only be available in hard copy and other information may only be available for inspection at the company's Head Office. Acquiring information from either of these sources may incur a cost in accordance with publication scheme charges that reflects the company's costs such as:-

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage and packaging
- The cost directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Any charges will be in accordance with Wigan and Leigh Housing's policy.

Who do I contact?

For information concerning the scheme or if you wish to make a request for other information you can contact the following:

WALH Information Officer, Tel: 01942 486539 or e-mail them at informationrights@walh.co.uk

The information can be found on the organisation's website at the following location:

www.walh.co.uk/Performance/FreedomofInformation

Making a complaint, suggestion or compliment

If you are not satisfied with Wigan and Leigh Housing's response to a request for information you may make a complaint to the address below: -

Wigan and Leigh Housing
Unity House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HE

Tel: 01942 705040
e-mail: complaints@walh.co.uk

If after going through Wigan and Leigh Housing's formal complaint and appeals system you are still not satisfied then the Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes provision for you to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office: -

Wycliffe House,
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

or <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

If you have any suggestions or compliments, we need to know so that we can improve our service to you. Feedback forms are available by contacting:

01942 705040 or www.walh.co.uk/walh.co.uk/walh/comments-form.htm

Advice and Assistance

If you need help to make a request for information you may contact the following: -

WALH Information Officer, Tel: 01942 486539 or e-mail them at informationrights@walh.co.uk

Reviewing and maintaining the scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that a publication scheme should be reviewed from time to time. Wigan and Leigh Housing is responsible for reviewing and maintaining this guide to information and the data it contains. Material will be updated and any outdated information will be removed. This guide and operation of the scheme will be reviewed annually in accordance with The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Publication Scheme Review Guidance.

Copyright

Reproducing material supplied under this Publication Scheme without the express permission of Wigan and Leigh Housing may be an infringement of copyright. Requests for permission should be addressed to the Company Secretary and Admin Manager, Tel: 01942 486535.

Wigan and Leigh Housing's Guide to Information

Wigan and Leigh Housing's A-Z web pages provide a guide to the information available at www.walh.co.uk/AtoZ and there is also a search facility to assist you to find other information that may not be included in the A-Z.

The guidance below is intended to assist you by giving some examples of the type of information Wigan and Leigh Housing routinely makes available. Where a document is indicated within this guidance it will be the current version.

1. Who we are and what we do

Wigan and Leigh Housing Company was set up in 1 April 2002, to manage and maintain council homes on behalf of Wigan Council.

The not-for-profit organisation is responsible for managing all landlord services for Wigan Council's 23,000 homes including rent collection, repairs and maintenance, dealing with empty properties and all tenancy matters. Wigan and Leigh Housing also deals with other functions on behalf of the Council, such as homelessness and council house sales.

The Company's Head Office is located at:

**Unity House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HE**

Tel: 01942 705040

e-mail: enquiries@walh.co.uk

- **Location and opening times of Wigan and Leigh Housing offices**

The company operates five Area Housing Offices, two property shops and a Housing Options Advice Centre. Addresses, opening times and contact details can be gained through our website www.walh.co.uk or calling 01942 705040

- **Contact details for all departments that deal directly with customers**

The telephone numbers for each of the services that we provide.

- **Wigan and Leigh Housing Directorate structure**

Identification, responsibilities, and biographical details of the people who are making strategic and operational decisions about providing the company's services. This includes the various directorate areas within the organisation, including those holding the posts of Chief Executive and Members of the Strategic Management Team.

- **Memorandum and Articles of Association**
- **Scheme of Delegations**

The powers of the Organisation and the Organisation Directors are outlined in our Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Scheme of Delegations sets out the powers delegated from the Council to the Board and from Board to Committees and the Chief Executive.

- **The Wigan and Leigh Housing Board**

Wigan and Leigh Housing is managed by a Board of Directors. The Board is made up of six Council Tenants, four Council representatives and four independent members. You can obtain details of all the Board Members, when they meet, and view the agenda and minutes of Board meetings.

- **Wigan and Leigh Housing Vision**

The Board sets the strategic direction of Wigan and Leigh Housing which is set out in the organisation's vision.

- **Relationships with other authorities/organisations**

This includes information about other authorities/organisations working with WALH, for example, Wigan Council, partnering contractors and housing associations.

2. What we spend and how we spend it

- **Financial statements, budgets and variance reports**

Wigan and Leigh Housing's Statement of Accounts.

- **Capital Programme**

Our Delivery and Business Plan/Asset Management Plan.

- **Spending Reviews**

WALH's statement of accounts and public Board reports.

- **Voluntary sector & community funding**

Information about the provision of voluntary sector and community grants, such as the Community Involvement Fund.

- **Financial audit reports**

Internal Audit Reports.

- **Board Members allowances scheme and the amount paid under it each year**

The allowances Board Members are entitled to claim and the amount each member receives in expenses.

- **Staff allowances and expenses**

Details of the allowances and expenses that can be claimed.

- **Pay and grading structure**

Salary bands for all grades, including senior and chief officer grades.

- **Procurement procedures**

The procedures by which we purchase goods and service from others, for example, Procurement Strategy and Guidance Policy, Value for Money strategy.

- **Contracts currently being tendered**

Contracts currently available for public tender.

- **Lists of contracts awarded and their value**

Contracts awarded under the Public Contract Regulations 2006 as published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

- **Financial statements for projects and events**

Wigan and Leigh Housing's Statement of Accounts and public board reports/decisions.

- **Funding for partnership arrangements**

Details of the funding arrangements where Wigan and Leigh Housing takes the lead role in a partnership arrangement or contributes funding to a partnership managed by another authority.

3. What our priorities are and how we are doing

- **Any reports indicating main priorities and progress against them**

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews. For example, the company Vision, Business and Delivery Plan Performance Information, Governmental Inspection Reports.

- **Annual Report**

Wigan and Leigh Housing's Annual Report.

- **Public Service agreements and local area agreements**

Local public service agreements.

Partnership agreements made by Wigan and Leigh Housing with various groups and partnerships, in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. For example, the Tenants' Compact - Our Agreement.

- **Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities**

For example, Housing strategies and plans, homeless strategies.

- **Impact Assessments**

Impact Assessments, for example, Equality Impact Assessments.

- **Service Standards**

Customer Care Charter and Service Standards.

4. How we make decisions

- **Decision making processes and records of decisions**

Details of how various decisions are made, and by whom.

- **Minutes of meetings of the Board**

Board minutes (records) and the minutes of similar meetings where decisions are made, but excluding information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.

- **Timetable of Board meetings**

Board meeting dates for the current year.

- **Public consultations**

Consultation papers or information, any public summary of the responses and the outcome of the consultation exercise. For example. Tenants' Satisfaction Survey, Sheltered Housing Survey.

5. Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

- **Policies and procedures for conducting departmental business**

- **Policies and procedures for delivering our services**

- **Policies and procedures for recruiting and employing staff**

Current written protocols, policies and procedures and codes of practice for delivering our services and responsibilities. A number of policies, for example, equality and diversity, and health and safety, will cover both the provision of services and the employment of staff. Details of current vacancies will be readily available. Policies and procedures for handling request for information are included.

- **Customer service**

Standards for providing services to the company's customers, including the complaint procedure.

- **Records management and personal data policies**

Information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, Freedom of Information and Data Protection (including data sharing) policies.

- **Charging regimes and policies**

Details of any statutory charging regimes, including charges made for information routinely published. For example, details of service charges.

6. Lists and Registers

This includes any information we are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers. Any lists or registers that we may be required to produce in the conduct of our business. Property asset list. Disclosure logs - indicating the information provided in response to requests.

7. The services we offer

Information about the services we offer. In addition to the first class of information detailing the organisation's roles and responsibilities, this class includes details of the services the company provides, internationally, nationally and locally as a result of them. This includes:

- **Details of company services**

For example, the A to Z Navigation Headings on the Internet home page and individual pages telling our customers what we offer www.walh.co.uk

- **Services for which the company is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees**

- **Leaflets**

- **Media Releases/Newsletters**

For example, Wigan and Leigh Housing News page and Housing Matters (WALH tenant magazine).