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Statement of intent

Aiming Higher's Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy has been produced to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The policy incorporates guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The policy provides a framework for compliance and is supported by appropriate procedures and guidance documents to provide advice and maintain good practice.

This policy applies to all members of staff including temporary or casual or agency staff, volunteers, students, work placements, contractors and suppliers working for, or on behalf of, Aiming Higher.

Making a request for information

Requests for information can be accessed on receipt of a specific written request. For a request to be considered valid under the FOIA, it must:

- be in writing;
- include a name and address for correspondence (email address is sufficient);
- detail the information requested.

Requests should be addressed Aiming Higher, by email to the Chair of Trustees at info@aiminghighercharity.org.uk or by post to:

The Chair of Trustees
Aiming Higher
231-233 Church Street
Blackpool
FY1 3PB

Responding to a request

Aiming Higher will respond to a request promptly, and by the twentieth working day following receipt of the request. If we are unable to respond to the request within the 20 working days, we will contact the requestor with an explanation and request an extension of time.

The response will confirm whether or not Aiming Higher holds the information, and, if it does hold the information, Aiming Higher will release it. However, some information may be exempt from disclosure under one of the exemptions in the Act.

Aiming Higher has the right to charge applicants for supplying the requested information but is under no obligation to provide information if the cost of doing so would be in excess of an



'appropriate limit'. The fee of £10 for handling a request is calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Fees Regulations.

Responsibilities

Aiming Higher has a responsibility to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Act and has designated the Chair of Trustees as the officer with overall responsibility for this policy and to provide the Board of Trustees with guidance and advice on Freedom of Information issues.

All non-routine requests for information received will be processed and responded to.

All staff are responsible for ensuring the records they manage are accurate and complete, and that all requests are handled efficiently and promptly in accordance with the Freedom of Information guidelines.

Every member of staff must recognise that all recorded information may be provided to the public and that in every case, the law requires there to be full and unconditional disclosure unless one of the statutory exemptions/exceptions applies.

All staff should be aware that any breach of the FOIA may result in the Aiming Higher disciplinary procedures being instigated.

Aiming Higher will respond to a request within 20 working days and will treat these requests in line with the guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Exemptions

There are a number of exemptions under the FOIA where Aiming Higher is not required to provide the information requested. The Act also limits the circumstances in which information can be withheld.

In cases where Aiming Higher considers a request is subject to an exemption, consideration will be given as to whether or not the information can be disclosed. This would take into account the public interest, the rights of data subjects, legal and contractual obligations and issues of information access and security.

Information will only be withheld in accordance with the exemptions specified by legislation, and the reasons for applying the exemption will be provided to the requester.

A full list of the exemptions can be found on the [ICO's website](#).



Review Procedure

If the requestor is unhappy with the way in which their request has been handled, they can request a review by contacting the Aiming Higher by email at info@aiminghighercharity.org.uk or by post to:

The Chair of Trustees
Aiming Higher
231-233 Church Street
Blackpool
FY1 3PB

A request for an internal review should be submitted within 40 days of receipt of the response to the request. The requestor should specify why they do not agree with the initial response and what factors they would like to be taken into account as part of the review. This should include any public interest arguments for disclosure.

The request for review will be dealt with within 20 working days of receipt. If the review will take longer to conduct, the requestor will be informed why and when to expect a response.

If the requestor remains dissatisfied with the handling of their request or complaint, they have a right to appeal to the ICO at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Records Management

Aiming Higher will manage its records effectively and systematically to ensure information retrieval is simple, timely and meets legislative, regulatory, funding and ethical requirements.

Policy Review

This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments to Data Protection legislation.