

A PUBLICATION SCHEME
under the freedom of information act 2000

THE PARADES COMMISSION
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Windsor House
9-15 Bedford Street
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Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

The role of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland is set out in the [Public Processions \(Northern Ireland\) Act 1998](#). Its duties can be broken down into four main areas:

- 1) to promote greater understanding by the general public of issues concerning public processions;
- 2) to promote and facilitate mediation as a means of resolving disputes concerning public processions;
- 3) to keep itself generally informed as to the conduct of public processions and protest meetings; and
- 4) to keep under review, and make such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Secretary of State concerning, the operation of the Act.

Further information about the Parades Commission can be found on its [website](#).

The Parades Commission is an independent, statutory body set up by government to help manage and resolve conflict around public processions in Northern Ireland. All public processions must be notified to the Commission. The only exceptions are processions by the Salvation Army and processions in the context of funerals. While there are over 3,000 parades annually in Northern Ireland, approximately 94% of these are without contention and pass off with no noticeable intervention by the Commission. In the case of processions deemed contentious, the Commission considers these in greater detail. The Commission amasses evidence, information and advice and looks at these processions in the context of human rights and other criteria set out in the Public Processions Act itself. Restrictions on public processions are only applied where it is necessary to do so, and then only in a proportionate manner.

The Commission is eager that the public understands its work in general and its decision making process in particular. The Commission has published a number of reports, pamphlets and guides to provide greater transparency. All its determinations, that is its decisions in relation to public processions, are published in full on the Commission's website and hard copies are available on application to the Commission's office. These determinations set out the reasoning behind the Commissions' decisions, indicating its concern for human rights,

tolerance and the promotion of a pluralist, participative and democratic society.

The Parades Commission is supported by a Secretariat. The Secretariat are a small team of approximately 12 civil servants, who are based at the Commission's office in Windsor House, Belfast.

This Publication Scheme covers the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland only.

Further information on any public authorities mentioned in this document and their contact details can be found in the "links" section of this Publication Scheme.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

The Freedom of Information Act received Royal Assent in November 2000. It is part of the Government's commitment to greater openness. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities and sets out exemptions from that right. In other words, it gives any individual a statutory right to request information directly from any public authority and have it provided except where it is classified as exempt under Sections 12 and 21-44 of the Act. It will be brought into force from **January 2005**. The full text of the [Freedom of Information Act](#), both in print and online, can be obtained from The Stationery Office (details provided below).

Further advice about Freedom of Information may be obtained from the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (details provided below).

Until the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) is fully implemented in January 2005, access to Parades Commission for Northern Ireland information not made available under this Publication Scheme or otherwise readily accessible, will be administered in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (detailed below).

The Parades Commission Publication Scheme provides details of those items which are generally available free of charge. In most other cases, the Parades Commission may charge a fee of £10 for requests made under the Open Government Code and the Data Protection Act. Details of specific charges under the Freedom of Information Act will be published in advance of January 2005.

OTHER MEANS OF OBTAINING INFORMATION

The Code of Practice on Access to Government Information already commits Government Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to publishing the facts, and analysis of the facts, which Government considers relevant and important in framing major policy proposals and decisions. This Code is followed by the Parades Commission as far as it is applicable to specific areas of the Commission's work; although it has to be admitted that it has limited application. The full text of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, both in print and online, can be obtained from the Lord Chancellor's Department (details provided below).

PUBLICATION SCHEMES

Publication Schemes are a legal requirement under Sections 19 and 20 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. These sections come into force from November 2002 onwards. Publication Schemes are essentially guides to the information that a public authority or other body routinely publishes or intends to publish. If you are looking for information about the Parades Commission, you will find it helpful to use this Publication Scheme as your first port of call.

THIS PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Parades Commission's Publication Scheme is available on its [website](#) and in print from the Commission's office in Belfast. Indicators will show where a charge may be levied. The following could apply to information you intend to use for private research/study:

- Free of charge where available on the website (i.e. there is no charge by the Parades Commission, but the user may have to meet any charges made by their Internet service provider, personal printing costs, etc.). Many public libraries have Internet facilities. However, for those without Internet access, a single printout of material from the website is available from the Commission by post, free of charge. Requests to the Commission for larger print outs or for archived copies of documents which are no longer available on the web, may attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopying, postage etc. The Commission will let you know the cost at the time of your request. Any charge will be payable in advance.

From time to time some items will be revised or fall out of use. The Commission attempts to make copies of its major publications available through local libraries but these may not be retained indefinitely due to competition for space. It may not always be possible to provide copies of out of date or out of print material. A list of available information follows:

CLASS GROUP HEADING	CLASS / TYPE OF INFORMATION (including definitions where appropriate)	WHERE INFORMATION IN THIS CLASS IS AVAILABLE	IS THERE A CHARGE?
Procedural Documents	Legislation on the operation functions and duties of the Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Acts of Parliament can be viewed at www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk 	Free viewing on Website Free viewing on Stationery Office Website Charge for printed version from Stationery Office
	Review Procedures (why, when and how the Commission reviews its decisions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices • Police Stations in Northern Ireland 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Code of Conduct (behaviour for parading and protesting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices • Police Stations in Northern Ireland 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices Free from Police Stations)
	Procedural Rules (the procedures followed by the Commission))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices • Police Stations in Northern Ireland 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices Free from Police Stations)
	Guidelines (what the Commission considers in arriving at decisions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices • Police Stations in Northern Ireland 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices Free from Police Stations)

Information on Parades and notified Protests against parades	Parade Details (Organising body, town, date, timings, route, bands taking part, numbers involved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Protest Details (Organising body, town, date, timings, location, numbers involved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Historical Information (parade and protest details held since 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
General Publications	Annual Reports (including pen pictures of Commissioners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices according to availability
	Parade Organisers Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices according to availability
	Common Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices according to availability
	Statistical Analysis (number of parades by region, organisation, date etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission's Offices 	Free for simple requests. (Charges may apply for detailed or laborious analyses)
Information and Communication	Press Releases Speeches Conference Papers Frequently asked questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices

Parade Commission Decisions	Parades currently under Consideration by the Commission and the date of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Determinations (legally binding decisions and reasoning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Decisions (setting out Commissions thinking on a parade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices
	Review Decisions (legally binding decisions made after further considerations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Website • Commission's Offices 	Free on Website Free from Commission's Offices

FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

Feedback, comments or any complaints about this Publication Scheme should be addressed to the Publication Scheme Coordinator.

Parades Commission for Northern Ireland

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Responsibility for overseeing the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 rests with the Information Commissioner, who is the independent public official responsible directly to Parliament.

OTHER ADDRESS DETAILS

Northern Ireland Office (NIO)	Lord Chancellors Department
Stormont House Stormont Estate Belfast BT4 3SH Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 0700 Fax: +44 (0) 28 9052 8195 http://www.nio.gov.uk mailto:foi@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk	Selbourne House London SW1E 6QW Tel: +44 (0) 207 210 2665 Fax: +44 (0) 207 1415 http://www.lcd.gov.uk/foi/ogcode981.htm mailto:fidp@lcdhq.gsi.gov.uk
HMSO Licensing Division	Information Commissioner's Office
St Clements House 2-16 Colegate Norwich NR31 1BQ Tel: +44 (0)1 603 62100 http://www.hmso.gov.uk/copy.htm http://www.hmso.gov.uk/guides/htm	Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF Tel: +44 (0)16 2554 5700 Fax: +44 (0)16 2552 4510 http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk mailto:data@dataprotection.gov.uk