



Chief Executive's Office,  
Valuation Tribunal Service,  
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45 Whitechapel Road  
London E1 1DU

**VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE**  
**PUBLICATION SCHEME**  
**Guide to Information in the Scheme and**  
**How to make a Request under the Freedom of Information Act**

Senior officer responsible for maintenance of this Scheme is: Alan Begg, Resource Director

## **1. Introduction: What a publication scheme is and why it has been developed**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “Act”) states that public authorities and bodies should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public. Individuals and organisations have the right to request information from any public body, and therefore there is a requirement imposed by the Information Commissioner to ensure that public authorities adopt a publication scheme. Such a scheme commits the public body to make information available to the public as part of its normal activities. This information should be identified by classes and the scheme should set out:

- 1 The classes of information which they publish or intend to publish;
- 2 The manner in which the information is to be published; and
- 3 Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

In line with section 20 of the Act, The Valuation Tribunal Service’s (VTS) Publication Scheme consists of information already published and held by the VTS or information that is to be published in the future. This means that all information in our Publication Scheme is either available for you on our website to download and print off, or available in a traditional document form.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example information referring to national security or tribunal records.

## **2. Classes of information**

The Publication Scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future. This is split into ‘classes’ of information. The classes of information currently published are shown in the table below. Details of how the information is or will be published are set out there too.

There are seven classes of information in the Scheme as recommended by the Information Commissioner. Under each class there is a list of the information that we publish relating to that subject.

The Valuation Tribunal website (<http://www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk/>) contains much of the information we make available. If you are viewing this document on our website, where there is an entry below under ‘website’ form of publication You can access the information by clicking on the link.

All the information in the Publication Scheme will be provided free of charge.

As far as possible we hold information by each class beyond current to the previous three years.

If you feel that certain information is not published under our scheme, but should be, you can make a written request when its provision will be considered in accordance with requirements under the Act.

CLASS	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	FORMAT OF INFORMATION		
		Paper	Electronic	Website
<b>WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO</b>				
organisational information, structure, office locations and contacts		√	√	√
Information about the legislation that governs the Valuation Tribunal	Legislation that established the statutory bodies and appeals legislation			√
Areas of jurisdiction	For dealing with appeals			√
VTS Annual Report and Accounts	Summary information for each financial year	√	√	√
Management Statement	Sets out the broad framework within which the VTS will operate.	√	√	
<b>WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT</b>				
VTS Annual Report and Accounts		√	√	√
Procurement policy	Including tendering and contracting	√	√	
Contracts awarded	and their value			
Standing Financial Instructions	Internal financial regulation, including scheme of delegation	√	√	
Financial statements for projects		√	√	
Financial statements for events		√	√	
Financial Memorandum	Outlines our financial relationship with our Sponsoring Department	√	√	
Valuation Tribunal members' allowance rates	Details of allowance rates for Members	√		
Pay and grading structure		√	√	

<b>OUR PRIORITIES AND HOW WE ARE DOING</b>				
VTS Business Plan and Corporate Plan	Details the VTS' aims for the financial year and strategic objectives for a 3-year period	√	√	√
Risk Management Strategy	Outlines the strategies the VTS will employ in managing its risks	√	√	
Statistics about our workload	Appeals statistics	√	√	√
Audit information		√	√	
Statistics about complaints we receive		√	√	√
<b>HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS</b>				
VTS Board Standing Orders		√	√	
Non-Exempt Reports/Minutes of senior level meetings including results of any consultation exercises	Information circulated for VTS internal and Board meetings and mandatory consultations and non-exempt policy proposals	√	√	
Internal communications policy		√	√	
Consultation papers	Any current consultation papers will be on website	√	√	√
<b>OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>				
VTS Charter for Customers	Our service aims and commitments	√	√	√
Complaints policy	How we handle different types of complaints	√	√	√
Equality and diversity policy		√	√	√
Data handling policy		√	√	
Fraud Policy	Identifies areas of potential fraud, consequences and prevention measures, in place	√	√	

Communications Strategy	Highlights how the VTS will communicate with our internal and external stakeholders	√	√	
<b>LISTS AND REGISTERS</b>				
VTS Register of Board Members' Financial & Other Interests	Details of any financial or other interests (including dispensations).	√		
VTS Register of Board, Staff & Members' Gifts and Hospitality	Details of gifts/ hospitality received	√		
Register of Freedom of Information/Data Protection requests	Requests we have received during the year and how we have dealt with them	√	√	
Register of complaints received	Complaints we have received during the year and how we have dealt with them	√	√	
Health and Safety register		√	√	
Asset register		√	√	
<b>SERVICES WE OFFER</b>				
Tribunal decisions non-domestic rating (NDR)	NDR decisions, issued by VTs (last 6 years)	√	√	√
Tribunal decisions council tax (CT)	CT decisions, issued by VTs (last 6 years; on website since October 2005).	√	√	√
Appeals listed for hearing	Appeals listed on tribunal agendas. Forthcoming lists on the website	√	√	√
Valuation Tribunal guidance leaflets	Guidance leaflets to assist appellants through the appeals process	√	√	√
Valuation in Practice (ViP) Newsletter	Quarterly news on judicial matters: legislation, case law, tribunal procedures	√	√	√

Council Tax Guidance Manual	A reference manual for Council Tax	√	√	√
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### 3. Making an application for information to the Valuation Tribunal Service

Under the Freedom of Information Act you are able to ask the VTS for information which is not already published under this scheme, provided it is not exempt from disclosure. You have the right to ask for information to be provided in a particular way and we will try to meet your request so far as is reasonably practicable. You can ask for assistance if you have any difficulty in formulating or making an application, by contacting the VTS Information Officer. We will help you as much as possible. In order that we can do this, we require your request for information to have:

- A clear and understandable request with enough detail to locate the information;
- Your name and address so we can respond to your request; and
- An indication about the form in which you want the information.

Our information is held in the English language. The VTS acknowledges its obligations under disability and discrimination legislation to provide information in the appropriate format. We respect also the right of privacy in acknowledging your request for information and our staff dealing with your request will observe our own guidelines regarding data handling and information security. We also recognise that some of our registers may contain personal information – we will ensure that this is protected by the data protection principles and government guidance we are obliged to follow.

Your application will be dealt with as quickly as possible. You should give as much detail as you can in order to assist us in locating the information that you require. Some documents may include exempt information so you will only get the information which is not exempt. You only have a right to information and not necessarily to documents. Some documents may include exempt information so you will only get the information from them which is not exempt.

Any fee charged will be calculated by looking at the costs directly and reasonably incurred locating the information you have asked for and giving it to you. You will then be sent a 'Fee Notice' which you will have to pay within 30 days of your request – you will not receive information until you have paid the costs in the fees notice.

If the estimated cost of providing the information would be above the appropriate limit set by the government then we will not be under a duty to provide the information. However, the VTS will inform you if the limit will be exceeded and we will try to let you know what can be provided within that limit. Despite not being obliged to provide information which exceeds the limit the VTS will still be under a duty to advise and assist.

In order to protect the VTS there will be rules which govern multiple applications for information which are clearly trying to avoid the financial limits set by the government. However, we will try to help you as much as possible to get the information you want.

#### **4. Complaints and Feedback**

If you want to make any comments about this Publication Scheme or if you require further assistance or need to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to the VTS Information Officer at the

**Chief Executive's Office, Valuation Tribunal Service,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Black Lion House, 35 Whitechapel Road,, London E1 1 DU.  
Telephone: 0207 426 3900.  
Email: [foi@vto.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:foi@vto.gsx.gov.uk)**

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get from the VTS or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Office of the Information Commissioner. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

**ICO, Wycliffe House, Water Street, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF  
Tel: 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45  
Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)**