

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Confidentiality of Consultations

The Housing Executive will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Housing Executive can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Housing Executive in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Housing Executive cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Housing Executive should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Housing Executive's functions and it would not otherwise be provided.
- The Housing Executive should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature.
- Acceptance by the Housing Executive of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see the website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).