



PROACTIVE PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC STATEMENT

24 June 2021

The impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to bring unprecedented challenges for our society, both nationally and globally. Governments around the world continue to face significant challenges in responding to the pandemic to protect public health, civil liberties and individual prosperity.

As the global pandemic continues, the importance of transparency and the right to access information remains.

Recognising the role that access to information has in building trust in our global community during times of crisis and beyond, Information Commissioners around the world highlight the importance of the proactive disclosure of information held by government or public institutions.

The 12th Annual International Conference of Information Commissioners therefore urge governments responding to the ongoing global pandemic to pay due regard to the following principles, which reflect common information access principles and practice around the proactive publication of information held by government or public institutions:

- Proactive disclosure of information held by government or public institutions increases citizen participation in government processes and promotes better informed decision making through increased scrutiny, discussion, comment and review of government decisions.
- Public engagement in government decision making is important at all times, but in particular, during a global pandemic.
- The public's right of access to information relating to the COVID-19 pandemic is of critical importance to the effectiveness of the public health response, in circumstances where authorities make significant decisions that affect public health, civil liberties and economic participation.

- Information held by government or public institutions is to be managed for a public purpose and is a national resource.
- To the greatest extent possible, information held by government or public institutions should be published promptly and proactively, without the need for formal access requests.

Mechanisms, such as information publication schemes and administrative release, encourage the proactive release of information. Members will continue to promote, support, develop and implement such mechanisms to the greatest extent possible.