

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND ELIZABETH MICHAEL ASSOCIATES

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force on 1 January 2005, covering access to official information. In addition there are also regulations which provide access to environmental information. These are known as the Environmental Information Regulations.

The Freedom of Information Act applies to most public authorities (broadly defined as publicly funded organisations that work for the welfare of the whole population, including government departments, local authorities, educational establishments, NHS GPs and dentists, police forces, health authorities, along with companies which are wholly owned by public authorities). The Act gives the public a general right of access to information held by any such organisations.

It is intended to create better public understanding of:

- how public authorities carry out their duties;
- why they make their decisions; and
- how they spend public money.
- It will also promote a culture of openness and accountability across the public sector.

Elizabeth Michael Associates is not a public body. However, we deal with such organisations in our daily operations, and therefore are aware of the obligations and responsibilities of our clients in relation to the Act.

Freedom of Information has implications for the information we provide to a public authority about Elizabeth Michael Associates and information we process about public authority's jobs, recruitment and candidates. Information we provide about Elizabeth Michael Associates may subsequently be accessed under Freedom of Information by any person, including a competitor. As such, great care must be exercised in the provision of commercially sensitive information to a public body.

In providing a service to a public authority we will process data and hold information on their behalf. The authority may be approached by, for instance, an unsuccessful candidate to disclose information that is wholly or, in part, held by us. Where this is likely to arise, an agreement will be drawn up between Elizabeth Michael Associates and the public authority covering the management of such requests inclusive of the data protection issues.