



## North Tyneside Council

### Freedom of information requests concerning staff direct contact details

North Tyneside Council often receives requests for relating to the direct contact of staff for specific services.

The Authority has considered these requests carefully and is withholding this information. This is because it considers it exempt under section 36(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

#### **Refusal notice: Section 36(2) - information prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.**

We are frequently asked for direct contact details, including names, telephone number and email address of staff.

The Authority have decided to refuse this information under section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.

The reason for this is the Authority considers that disclosure of these contact details would prejudice the efficient and effective management of customer contact as certain members of staff may find themselves dealing with calls and emails that may have been more appropriately dealt with elsewhere.

Publication of direct contact details could also result in the public becoming confused about the most appropriate numbers to call.

On its website, the Council publishes details of the main contacts for its services [Contact the council | North Tyneside Council](#)

These contact details are widely published, and we consider that disclosing additional details will result in confusion and prejudice the effectiveness of the contact page. This page is updated as necessary and, regardless of any internal changes, the public will be able to easily reach the services they require.

Section 36 requires that the qualified person, the Council's Monitoring Officer, must give their reasonable opinion that the exemption is engaged. The Council's Monitoring Officer considers section 36 is engaged.

As Section 36 is a qualified exemption, we are also required to decide on a case by case basis, whether the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. The Authority has considered this below:

Factors in favour of maintaining the exemption:

- Ensuring that customer contact is managed effectively and efficiently is key to providing good public services. Routing customer calls through carefully managed public numbers ensures that calls are passed on to the correct services.
- Publication of key numbers helps ensure that customers can easily select the correct numbers for contacting services. These numbers are carefully managed and will not be changed, with the aims of ensuring that there is continuity of service regardless of any internal changes to services.

Factors against maintaining the exemption:

- We do not believe that there is any public interest in disclosing direct contact details as the Authority maintains a "Contact the Council" page on its website.

On balance of the public interest test, we believe that public interest lies in upholding the exemption and not releasing this information.

## Right of review

You have the right to a review of the Authority decision; however, the Authority last reviewed its position in March 2024. The Authority will review this position annually.

If you have made a Freedom of Information request to the Authority and you are unhappy with the initial response you may request an internal review within two months of the response by contacting, [FOI.Officer@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:FOI.Officer@northtyneside.gov.uk) please quote your FOI reference number.

If you are not satisfied with the response to your internal review, you may contact the information Commissioner's Office at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) or via post below:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

[www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints)