



REFERENCE BOOK UNDER SECTION 15 & 16 OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTS

SECTION 15 - Guide to the Functions and Records of the PRB

SECTION 16 - Guide to Rules and Procedures used by the PRB

Notice

It is the intention of the PRB to keep this manual and the information it contains as accurate and up to date as possible. However, users of the manual should be advised that some of the information supplied may through no fault of the PRB have changed post publication. Changes in information may come about due to staff changes, contact details/ change of address, changes in legislation, changes in organisational structures and areas of responsibility. Where changes occur, the PRB undertakes to update this manual within a reasonable timeframe.

The information in the guide is intended only as a guide and not a legal interpretation of any legislation mentioned. The PRB shall not accept any liability for any errors or omissions in this reference book.

The most up to date version of this manual can be downloaded from the PRB's website

www.pyriteboard.ie.

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1.0 Introduction

This reference book has been prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of Sections 15 and 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 1997, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2003. (“FOI Act”).

Its purpose, in accordance with **Section 15**, is to facilitate access to records held by the PRB by outlining the structure of the PRB, including a description of its functions, powers, duties and services it provides to the public, the classes of records held, and guidelines on how to make a request for information under the FOI Act.

Section 16 of the FOI Act requires the PRB to publish a manual containing:

- the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the body, and an index of any precedents kept, for the purposes of decisions under any enactment or scheme administered by us ‘with respect to rights, privileges, benefits, obligations, penalties or other sanctions to which members of the public are or may be entitled or subject under the enactment or scheme’ together with
- ‘appropriate information in relation to the manner or intended manner of administration of any such enactment or scheme.’

2.0 Overview of the PRB

Mission Statement

To procure the remediation of certain dwellings with damage caused by pyritic heave of hardcore under floor slabs in a fair, efficient, transparent and cost effective manner.

Establishment

The Pyrite Resolution Board (PRB) was established by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, following the commencement of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 on 10th January 2014, to make a scheme for the remediation of damage to certain dwellings caused by pyritic heave and to oversee and ensure the effective implementation

of a programme of remediation works for affected dwellings. The Scheme was made by the Board on 12th February 2014.

The Pyrite Remediation Scheme (the Scheme) constitutes the framework for the application of the provisions contained in the Act and came into operation on 13th February 2014.

Functions of the PRB

In broad terms:

- the Pyrite Resolution Board (PRB) accepts and validates applications under the Scheme and oversees the implementation of the pyrite remediation programme for approved dwellings. The scale of the programme is determined by the availability of funding and other factors.
- the Housing Agency, subject to the direction of PRB, remediates approved dwellings affected by pyrite. The Housing Agency also assesses and makes recommendations to the PRB on applications from homeowners for inclusion in the scheme.

3.0 Organisation and Management

3.1 Board

The Pyrite Resolution Board is governed by a Board which consists of the Chairman and 3 Members:

John O'Connor, Chairman

(Chairperson of Board of EirGrid plc. and formerly Chairperson of an Bord Pleanála)

Sean Balfe

(Director of Sustainability and the Built Environment, National Standards Authority of Ireland)

Matt Gallagher

(Formerly President of CIF and Chairman of Irish Home Builders Association)

Caroline Gill

(Barrister, formerly Insurance Ombudsman and Deputy Financial Services Ombudsman)

3.2 Staff

The day to day management and administration of the PRB's functions are delegated to the General Manager, Noel Carroll BE BCL, supported by staff assigned from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

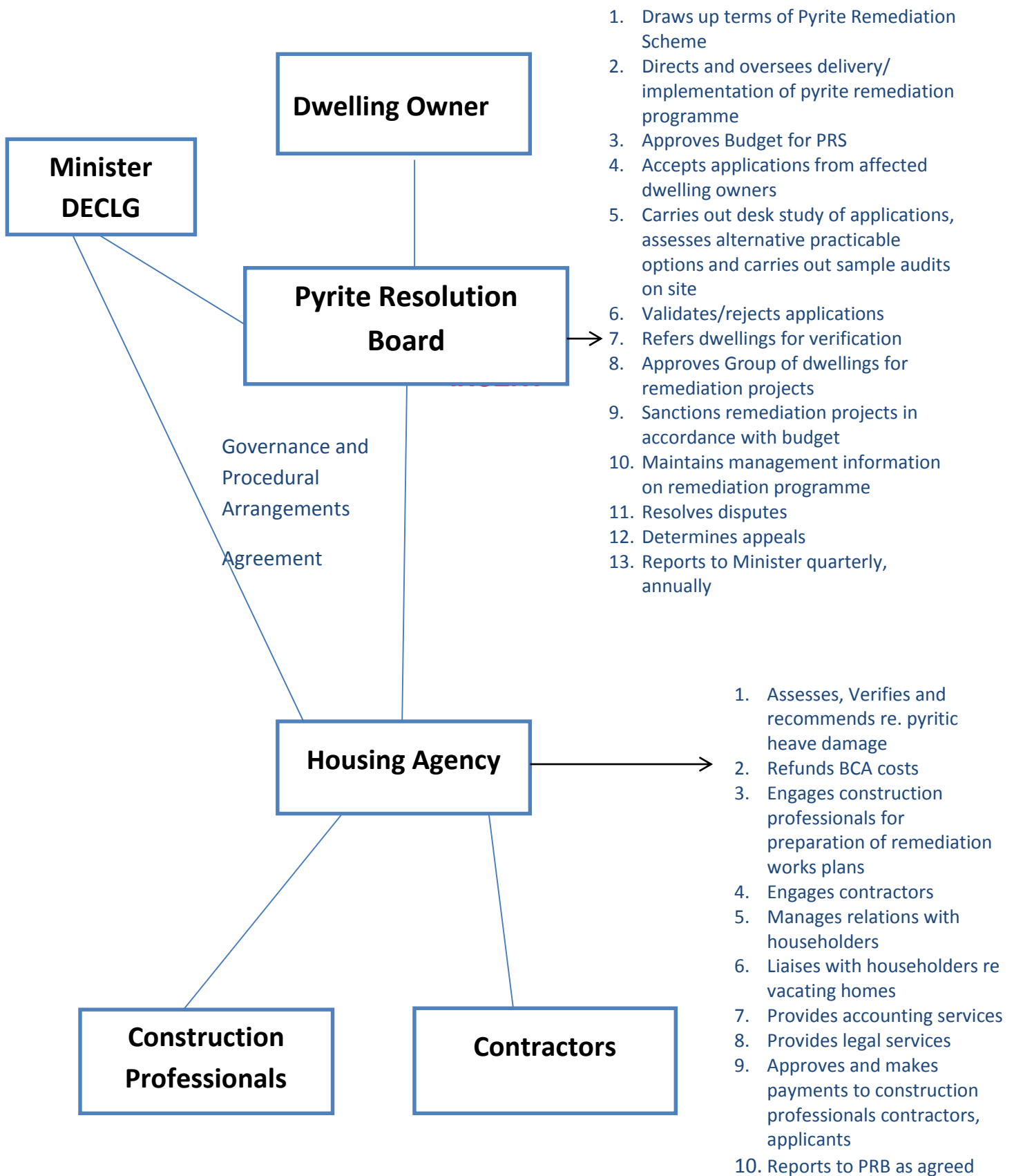
Secretarial, administrative, ICT, legal services and other services are also being provided to the Board by or through the Housing Agency.

3.3 Construction Design Professionals and Contractors

The Housing Agency has carried out a public procurement process to establish Framework Agreements for design professionals to design, supervise and certify the pyrite remediation works and for contractors to undertake the work.

The tender awards have been published on www.etenders.gov.ie.

3.4 JOINT STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION



4.0 Classes of Records

The PRB holds a variety of records in a number of formats including paper documents (including maps and plans) and information held electronically (on computer).

The classes of records held/ to be held by (or on behalf of) PRB include:

Personal Information

- Application Forms
- Appeal Applications
- FOI Requests
- Correspondence from the public.

Policy and Legislation

- Pyrite Resolution Act 2013
- Pyrite Remediation Scheme

Administration Records

- Minutes of Board Meetings
- Executive Board Papers
- Legal Documents
- Declarations of Interests
- Statistical Returns
- Annual and Quarterly Reports
- Correspondence with Government Departments
- Freedom of Information Manuals - Sections 15 & 16
- The PRB has a number of Policy & Procedures in place, which cover, Guidance for Decision Makers, Data Protection, Appeals Procedures etc.
- Corporate Governance Documentation –Corporate Governance Principles and Practices (including Code of Business Conduct) and an Internal Audit Charter.

5.0 Contact Point

Name: Pyrite Resolution Board
Address: 53 Mount Street Upper, Dublin 2
Phone: 1890 252842
Email: info@pyriteboard.ie

6.0 How to Access Information Outside the FOI Act

The PRB conducts its business in as open and transparent a manner as possible. In keeping with this policy, information is and will continue to be made available to the public outside the formal procedures of the FOI Acts.

This section describes how members of the public can:

- obtain routinely available information, e.g. through the Board's website; and
- make a request for information under the Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) Regulations and the Data Protection Acts 1998 – 2003.

Routinely Available Information

The Board currently makes information routinely available to the public in relation to its functions and activities. Such information will continue to be made available informally without the need to invoke the Freedom of Information Act.

The Board's website www.pyriteboard.ie, in particular the Publications section, is a useful source of information, where documents such as the Board's Annual and Quarterly Reports may be viewed. These reports also give some statistical information covering the number and status of submissions, information regarding appeals etc.

The PRB can also be contacted by phone (1890 252842) and email (info@pyriteboard.ie).

Data Protection Act 2014

The Act provides for the right of access by the data subject to his or her personal information. Information on how to make a request under the Data Protection Act is set out under a link on the home page of the Board's website www.pyriteboard.ie.

Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014 (hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations), give legal rights to those seeking to access information on the environment from public authorities.

Under these regulations, information relating to the environment held by, or for, a public authority must be made available on request, subject to certain exceptions. The AIE regulations also oblige public authorities to be proactive in disseminating environmental information to the public.

The AIE Regulations provide a definition of environmental information; outline the manner in which requests for information may be submitted to public authorities and the manner in which public authorities are required to deal with requests e.g. timeframes for response. The regulations also provide for a formal appeals procedure in the event that a person is unhappy with a decision on their request. Further information can be found in the link on the home page of the Board's website www.pyriteboard.ie.

7.0 How to access information under the FOI Act

Introduction

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 gives three legal rights to those seeking access to information held by public bodies covered by the Act:

- The right to access official records held by governmental departments and listed public bodies.
- The right to have personal information relating to them amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.
- The right to be supplied with reasons for decisions made or taken by governmental departments and listed public bodies that affect them.

Access to information under the FOI Act is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits.

Information on how to make a request under this Act is outlined below. It is also set out on the link on the homepage of the Board's website www.pyriteboard.ie.

What type of records can be requested under FOI?

You can ask for the following records held by the PRB:

- Any records relating to you personally, whenever they were created.
- All other records **except** “exempt records” which are specified in detail in the Act, e.g. information that may compromise the privacy rights of a third party.
- As required by the Act, the PRB has produced a reference book to facilitate access to official information held by the PRB by outlining the structure of the organisation, including a description of its functions, powers, duties and services it provides to the public, the classes of records held, and guidelines on how to make a request for information under the FOI Act. The rules and practices of the PRB in relation to any decisions made under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme are also outlined. This reference book, [Pyrite Resolution Board FOI Reference Book Section 15 & 16](#), can be found in “Documents and Useful Links” on page 12 of this document.

How do I make an FOI request?

A request for information under the Freedom of Information Act must be made in writing and should indicate that the information is being sought under the Freedom of Information Act. The request should also be sufficiently clear for us to identify the records sought. If we are not clear as to the records being sought we will contact you to seek clarification. If you wish to gain access to the records in a particular form (e.g. inspect the records, photocopies, computer disk, etc.) you should specify this in the application.

Alternatively, you may download the Freedom of Information Application Form.

Application form: [PDF](#) [MS Word](#)

FOI requests may be submitted by email to info@pyriteboard.ie or sent by post to the FOI Officer, Pyrite Resolution Board, Floor 3, Centre Park House, Centre Park Road, Cork.

Normally you will be notified of the decision on your request within 4 weeks of its receipt.

Is there a charge for getting information under the FOI Act?

There is no application fee for requests. In respect of non-personal requests, there may be charges for the time spent retrieving records and for any reproduction costs. These will be advised if applicable.

Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is less than €101, no fee is charged.

Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is greater than €500 but less than €700, a maximum charge of €500 applies.

Where the cost of search, retrieval and copying is greater than €700, the PRB FOI Unit can refuse to process the request. Details of actual charges relating to your request will be notified to you in writing.

List of Fees

- There is no charge for submitting a request.
- Search and Retrieval – €20 per hour (for requests that exceed the €100 minimum in terms of search, retrieval and copying), subject to the ceilings mentioned above.
- €0.04 per sheet for a photocopy.
- Internal review fee €30 (€10 for medical card holders).
- Appeal to the Information Commissioner €50 (€15 for medical card holders). Please go to the Information Commissioner's website for guidance on this appeal and applicable fee.

Notes

1. There is no charge if the records concerned contain only personal information relating to the requester, unless there are a significant number of records.
2. If you are claiming a reduced application fee, the request must be accompanied by the Medical Card registration number and your consent to the verification of these details with the Health Service Executive.

How is a Freedom of Information request processed by the PRB?

The FOI Officer will issue an acknowledgement letter to you within 10 working days (excluding Public Holidays) of your request being received. The next stages of the process will be clearly explained in this letter.

A decision regarding your request will normally be issued within 20 working days of the receipt of your request.

In some cases, an extension of time may be necessary to complete the decision. If this occurs while processing your request, the FOI Officer will contact you and explain this requirement.

Do I need to make an FOI request to get information from the PRB?

No. It is not necessary to make an FOI request to get information from the PRB. A considerable amount of material is already made available to the public through the Publications section of this website. Also, queries are routinely handled by phone and via email on info@pyriteboard.ie.

FOI provides an additional source of information by facilitating access to records not made routinely available.

Can a decision be appealed?

Yes. If you would like to appeal the decision made by the FOI Officer, you can do so by sending a request in writing asking for an internal review of the decision to Oliver O'Brien, Pyrite Resolution Board, Floor 3, Centre Park House, Centre Park Road, Cork.

An internal review fee of €30 (€10 for medical card holders) is applicable when appealing a decision and this is to be sent with your written submission.

The appeal process will involve a full reassessment of your original Freedom of Information request at a more senior level.

If, after the internal review, you are unsatisfied with the decision and you would like to appeal again, your appeal should be directed to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Disclaimer

The purpose of this document is to assist the public in making an FOI request. These pages are intended as a non-technical guide to certain aspects of the FOI Act 2014. They do not represent a legal interpretation and should not be taken as a definitive representation of anything contained in the FOI Act 2014.

8.0 Rules and Procedures

The FOI Act requires the rules and procedures of any scheme impacting on the public to be outlined or referenced. In this regard the following information is relevant:

- **Name of scheme:** Pyrite Remediation Scheme (the Scheme)
- **Purpose of the scheme:** The purpose of the Scheme is to procure the remediation of certain dwellings with damage caused by pyritic heave of hardcore under floor slabs.
- **Who is eligible to apply:** A person who is the owner or joint owner of a dwelling that complies with the eligibility criteria, may apply to the PRB for that dwelling to be included in the Scheme.
- **How to apply for remediation under the scheme:** The scheme is administered by the Pyrite Resolution Board and the Housing Agency, with the Department of the Environment maintaining oversight and a co-ordinating role. Applications can be made online via the website www.pyriteboard.ie.
- **Where applicable, the criteria governing variations in grant levels:** The Pyrite Resolution Act and Scheme do not provide for a grant towards the remediation works. The Scheme has been set up to remediate dwellings that have been significantly damaged as a result of pyritic heave caused by the swelling of hardcore under ground floor slabs.
- **Where applicable, set out the relevant appeals procedures and how these are accessed:** Applicants appealing decisions must do so to the Board in accordance with the “Appeals Procedure” that can be found in the Publications section of the website.
- **Other rules, procedures, processes, guidelines, interpretations and precedents used in the administration of the schemes/enactments:** The Scheme involves approval of applications in accordance with the detailed terms and conditions outlined in the “Pyrite Remediation Scheme” document which can be found in the Publications section of the website www.pyriteboard.ie. The “Pyrite Remediation Scheme – Guide for Scheme Participants” provides further information in relation to the actual remediation process and what is required of Scheme Participants throughout the process.

Related Documents and Useful Links

For further information on Freedom of Information please refer to the following links and documents:

Freedom of Information

www.foi.gov.ie

Office of the Information Commissioner

www.oic.gov.ie

Data Protection Commissioner

www.dataprotection.ie

Irish Statute Book

www.irishstatutebook.ie

PRB Freedom of Information Guide

Pyrite Resolution Board FOI Reference Book Section 15 & 16