Information Commissioner's Office

Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

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ICO launches new consultation on information sharing

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is today launching a consultation on its new framework code of practice for sharing personal information. At a time when increasing amounts of personal information are being shared, the framework code aims to help organisations to adopt good practice when sharing information and comply with the Data Protection Act.

The ICO is encouraging organisations to use the framework code to produce their own codes of practice. By addressing the main data protection issues such as information security, accuracy of information and retention periods, the framework code will help organisations make well-informed decisions about sharing personal information.

Iain Bourne, Head of data protection projects at the ICO, says: "Good practice in this area is of paramount importance. Organisations that share information must do so responsibly. If they do not, they risk losing individuals' trust.

"The framework code of Practice aims to help establish good practice when sharing personal information, whether it is being shared with another organisation or between different departments within the same organisation. It should also help to reduce the uncertainty that can surround information-sharing."

Recognising that different organisations have different needs, depending on the kind of information-sharing they are involved in, the framework code is designed to be

flexible. Some organisations may adopt the framework code in its entirety, others may wish to extract some of its content and integrate this into existing policies and systems. The framework code can equally be used as a checklist to evaluate current procedures.

The framework code of Practice for Sharing Personal Information is available at:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/Home/about_us/consultations/our_consultations.aspx

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If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
3. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles, which make sure that personal information is:
    - Fairly and lawfully processed
    - Processed for limited purposes
    - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
    - Accurate and up to date
    - Not kept for longer than is necessary
    - Processed in line with your rights
    - Secure
    - Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection
4. The deadline for submissions to the consultation is 1 October 2007.