



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

## **Press Release**

**Strictly embargoed until 00.01 on 07 August 2007**

### **New information sharing guide published for authorities**

The Information Commissioner's Office has today published new guidance to help local authorities and other organisations understand their obligations under the Data Protection Act when sharing and using information about business people.

The ICO recognises that sharing and using information about business people and the businesses they run can be beneficial to local authorities and to business people. For example, sharing information could make life less administratively burdensome for business people. The Data Protection Act does not prevent an authority sharing information on business people. However, information sharing must not be done in a way that is unfair or detrimental to the individual.

Local authorities must recognise that some information held about business people will be more sensitive than other information, for example, information about their earnings. Authorities must therefore consider the way that this information is used or shared. Information that relates not just to a business activity but also a business person's private life should also be considered more carefully.

Iain Bourne, Head of Data Protection Projects, said: "Sharing information on business people can clearly present benefits to businesses and society generally. We appreciate the need for local authorities to make best use of the information they hold and this guidance will help authorities make sensible judgements about how they use this information."

The guidance also provides advice to local authorities regarding consent and transparency issues and what to do if a business person objects to their information being shared.

This good practice note is part of a series published by the Information Commissioner's Office to help explain data protection in simple terms.

## **ENDS**

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](http://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](http://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 website also carries copies of other good practice and technical guidance notes in this series. These include:
  - a. Subject access and third party information
  - b. CCTV
  - c. Subject access and employment references
  - d. Pension trustees
  - e. Professionals' opinions
  - f. Buying and selling databases
  - g. Outsourcing
  - h. Exam guidance
  - i. Privacy Enhancing Technologies
  - j. Council tax information
  - k. Information on the electoral register