



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

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

Date: Wednesday 25 July 2007

### **Chester man sentenced for defrauding businesses**

A 37 year old man from Chester has been sentenced to 20 months in prison at Liverpool Crown Court after pleading guilty to fraudulently obtaining over £400,000 from a number of businesses in the region. This follows a successful joint investigation by Merseyside Police, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Tameside Trading Standards.

Between December 2002 and April 2004 Christopher J Williams of Hoole deceived businesses into believing he was an agent working on behalf of the Information Commissioner's Office. He sent fake forms to companies requiring them to register under the Data Protection Act and demanding they pay him a fee of between £95 and £135. Williams, along with one other man, ran a number of bogus agencies which directly targeted businesses.

Commenting on the conviction, the judge said this was 'a well planned and sophisticated offence led by greed and cloaked in officialdom.'

Simon Entwisle, Chief Operating Officer at the ICO, said: "We are very pleased with the outcome of this investigation. The ICO will continue to work with other authorities to bring people to justice who try to extort money from businesses in this way."

Earlier this year Francis Boyd was sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment for his involvement in the bogus agencies. Both defendants are now subject to further investigation with a view to financial confiscation under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

## **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)

Alternatively, please contact Nick Pope, Merseyside Police on 0151 777 3267 or Alistair Newton, Tameside Trading Standards on 0161 342 3905.

### **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