

20 November 2007

Confidential details lost by Revenue and Customs

Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner, said:

“This is an extremely serious and disturbing security breach. This is not the first time that we have been made aware of breaches at the HM Revenue and Customs – we are already investigating two other breaches. Incidents like these illustrate that any system is only as good as its weakest link. The alarm bells must now ring in every organisation about the risks of not protecting people’s personal information properly. As I highlighted earlier this year ([in my annual report](#)), it is imperative that organisations earn public trust and confidence by addressing security and other data protection safeguards with the utmost vigour.

“I am pleased that HMRC reported this breach to my Office and that the Chancellor has announced an independent review by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Chancellor has agreed that the full report will be made available to my Office and we will then decide what further action may be appropriate. Searching questions need to be answered about systems, procedures and human error inside both HMRC and NAO.”

Recent [research](#) commissioned by the ICO showed that people now consider protecting their personal information as the second most socially important issue above the NHS, national security and environmental issues.

For more details please contact the ICO press office on 0207 025 7580

Further information on data security is available [here](#)