

Friday 5 September 2008

Marks & Spencer blame Data Protection Act wrongly in Superman complaint

In the news today is the story of a Marks & Spencer employee who told the mother of a seven year old that they could not talk to her about the delivery of her son's Superman suit because it would infringe his data protection rights. This is a clear example of a data protection duck out, using the Data Protection Act as an excuse when dealing with enquiries from customers. Whilst it right for organisation to be careful before releasing personal information, this case demonstrates an absence of common sense. In the circumstances it was obvious that the seven year old child would not have ordered the Superman suit himself. Marks & Spencer were not being asked to release any personal information: they were simply being told that a belt was missing from the order. The Data Protection Act gives us all important rights, requiring organisations to keep our personal information accurate, up to date and secure. Misuse of the Act has the potential to devalue it and confuse individuals.

For media enquires, please contact the ICO press office on 0207 025 7580.

For all general enquires, please contact the ICO customer service team on 08456 306060.