



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

Press Release

Date: 25 April 2008

For immediate release

Information Commissioner reminds political parties in Wales of their data protection obligations

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is urging all political parties to respect people's privacy during the May local elections.

Under the Privacy, Electronic and Communications Regulations 2003, political parties are not permitted to make unwanted marketing calls to numbers registered on the Telephone Preference Service (TPS). The Regulations also forbid organisations from making wholly automated unsolicited marketing calls to individuals, unless consent has been given to receive such calls.

Anne Jones, Assistant Commissioner in Wales, said: 'Political parties must observe the law during the election campaign. Unsolicited marketing calls can be very irritating and it is unacceptable for any organisation to make such calls to individuals who have expressly said that they do not wish to be contacted in this way. The ICO has powers to take action against organisations, including political parties, that do not respect individuals' rights and we stand ready to use those powers.'

Political parties can legitimately make unsolicited live voice marketing calls to any number not registered on TPS, unless the subscriber has advised them directly that they do not want such calls.

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

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. The guidance notes can be downloaded from the ICO website:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/detailed_specialist_guides/telephone_marketing_by_a_political_party.pdf

http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/practical_application/promotion_of_a_political_party.pdf

3. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
4. 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