



Information Commissioner's Office

Press Release

For immediate release

11.01.10

Action taken after personal details found in waste bins

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has found Bellgrange Mortgages and Insurance Services Ltd in breach of the Data Protection Act after clients' details were found in two large waste bins intended for the use of local residents. The organisation, based in Stanmore, has signed an official [Undertaking](#) to improve data security.

The material included mortgage application forms, client bank account details and copies of documents used to verify client identity. A small number of the documents also contained medical information.

Following the discovery, the documents were either returned to Bellgrange or destroyed by a waste disposal contractor. Bellgrange responded to the incident by offering to register the affected individuals with a fraud protection service provider.

In addition, Bellgrange has agreed to put adequate security measures in place. It will ensure there is an adequate policy regarding the storage and disposal of personal data, and staff are sufficiently trained and adhere to the new policy.

Sally Anne-Poole Head of Enforcement and Investigations, said: "This incident highlights the need for organisations to dispose of material containing personal details securely and safely. Organisations must employ security measures to ensure personal data is in no way compromised. I am pleased that Bellgrange is taking action to prevent a similar situation occurring in the future."

ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk. View the Undertaking at http://www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection/enforcement.aspx

Notes to Editors

1. The data controller shall, as from the date of this Undertaking and for so long as similar standards are required by the Act or other successor legislation, ensure that personal data is processed in accordance with the Seventh Data Protection Principle in Part I of Schedule 1 to the Act, and in particular that:

- (1) Physical security measures are adequate to prevent unauthorised access to personal data;
- (2) There is an adequate policy covering the storage and disposal of personal data ;
- (3) Staff are aware of the policy for the storage and disposal of personal data and are appropriately trained on how to follow that policy;
- (4) The policy covering the storage and disposal of personal data is followed by staff;
- (5) The data controller shall implement such other security measures it deems appropriate to ensure that personal data is protected against unauthorised and unlawful process, accidental loss, destruction, and/or damage.

2. The Information Commissioner's Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

3. 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.

4. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can find us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ICOnews

5. 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