

**For immediate release**

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### **Keep an eye on your credit file and avoid financial problems**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is urging consumers to ensure that their credit reference file is accurate and up to date in 2010.

Millions of consumers will use credit to help them through the year and it is essential that they make sure the information accessed by lenders is accurate. If the content of an individual's credit reference file is wrong or out of date, banks, shops and catalogue companies could turn down their request for credit.

Under the Data Protection Act every citizen has rights which allow us to obtain and protect our vital financial information. The ICO has a practical, easy to understand consumer guide detailing these rights, called '[Credit Explained](#)'.

David Smith, Deputy Commissioner at the ICO, said: "Many of us will be relying on credit to get us through 2010. Out of date or wrong information in your credit file might not only stop you getting the credit you need but could have further damaging or embarrassing consequences. By checking your credit file regularly you can spot anything that's wrong and act swiftly to correct it. Our guide explains how to use your rights under the Data Protection Act to protect your financial information."

If an individual discovers inaccurate information on their credit reference file, the Data Protection Act allows them to ask for the information to be corrected by the organisation that provided it to the credit reference agency. If, following this, the incorrect information remains on the credit reference file, the individual can complain to the ICO.

**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)

## Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner's Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.
2. The ICO has 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
3. Organisations can now sign the Personal Information Promise to demonstrate their commitment to protecting people's personal information by visiting the website at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)
4. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can find us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ICOnews](http://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