



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

Press Release

For immediate release

Date: 18 February 2009

Diana correspondence is personal and must not be disclosed

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has ruled that correspondence between Diana, Princess of Wales, and the government should not be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Under the Act communications with the Royal Family are exempt from disclosure, however this exemption is subject to the public interest test.

The ICO has upheld a decision by the Cabinet Office on the basis that the correspondence is of a personal nature and does not comment on government or public policy. The ICO's ruling notes that 'disclosure of information relating to communications with the Royal Family is likely to be strongest in cases where the information relates to the performance of a public role or function, as opposed to private or personal matters.' Deputy Information Commissioner, Graham Smith, highlights that 'it is important to draw a clear distinction between matters of public interest and matters about which the public may be merely curious.'

In the ruling the Deputy Information Commissioner also highlights that members of the Royal Family, some of whom are referenced in the correspondence, enjoy the same data protection rights as other individuals.

The full decision notice can be viewed at

http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2009/fs_50142320.pdf

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

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner's Office promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is the UK's independent influential and practical authority on information rights and responsibilities, making a difference to people.
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. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk