

## **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

### **Using the Law to protect your information.**

The Data Protection Act works in two ways. It gives you certain rights. It also says those who record and use personal information must be open about how the information is used and must follow the eight principles of 'good information handling'.

### **How can I find out what is held about me?**

The Data Protection Act allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer and in some paper records. This is known as the 'right of subject access'.

If you want to know whether information is held about you and if so what, you will need to write to the person or organisation you believe holds the information.

You should ask for a copy of all the information held about you to which the Data Protection Act applies. If you are not sure who to write to within an organisation, address it to the Company Secretary or Chief Executive.

### **Can I see all the information held about me?**

Yes, with exceptions. For example, if providing you with the information would be likely to affect:

- the way crime is detected or prevented;
- catching or prosecuting offenders; or
- assessing or collecting taxes or duty.

### **What will be sent to me?**

They will send you a copy of the information they have about you. You should also receive a description of why your information is processed; anyone it may be passed to or seen by, and the logic involved in any automated decisions. The information may be sent as a computer print-out, in a letter, or on a form. However, it should be easy to understand, and any codes should be explained.

### **Does a data controller always have to reply?**

Yes, they have to reply. If you do not receive a reply to your request within 40 days, send the organisation a reminder by recorded delivery (remember to always keep a copy). If you still don't receive a reply fairly quickly or if the information you receive is wrong or incomplete, contact our information line. The Commissioner can help make sure that you get a reply and if one of the principles has been broken, she can take enforcement action against the data controller.

### **Any further questions?**

Contact:

The Data Protection Commissioner  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Or go to the [dataprotection](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk/) <http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk/> website.

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### **Links**

Online privacy advice <http://www.fwlaw.com/>

Human Rights Act <http://www.hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm>

CBI <http://www.cbi.org.uk/>

Data Protection Commission <http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk/>

Privacy International <http://www.privacyinternational.org/>

Foundation for Information Policy Research <http://www.fipr.org/>

Dept of Trade and Industry privacy measures: consultation and responses <http://www.dti.gov.uk/cii/lbpintro.htm>