

## Data protection policy

---

This is a statement of the data protection policy adopted by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). Responsibility for the policy rests with the OFT's Data Protection Coordinator, Ian Bennett. The Policy is subject to regular review to reflect, for example, changes to legislation or to the structure, work or policies of the OFT. All staff are expected to apply the policy and seek advice when required.

The OFT needs to collect and use certain types of information about the people with whom it deals in order to operate. These include individuals who are being investigated; individuals who supply information or conduct business with the OFT, the OFT's own employees, suppliers and others with whom the OFT conducts business.

The OFT regards the lawful and correct treatment of information as important to the achievement of our objectives and to the success of our operations and to maintaining confidence between those with whom we deal and ourselves. We therefore need to ensure that the OFT treats personal information lawfully and correctly. To this end, we fully endorse and adhere to the Principles of data protection, as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

The eight Principles require that personal information:

- shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met
- shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes
- shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed
- shall be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date
- shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for the specified purposes(s)

- shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subjects under the Act
- should be subject to appropriate technical and organisational measures to prevent the unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data, or the accidental loss, destruction, or damage to personal data
- shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

To comply with these Principles the OFT will through appropriate management:

- observe fully the conditions regarding the fair collection and use of information
- meet its legal obligations to specify the purposes for which information is used
- collect and process appropriate information only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil our operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements
- ensure the quality of the information used
- ensure that information is held no longer than is necessary
- ensure that the rights of people about whom information is held can be fully exercised under the Act, this will include the right to be informed that processing is being undertaken
- to access one's personal information; to prevent processing in certain circumstances and to correct, rectify, block or erase information that is regarded as wrong information
- take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information, and
- ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards.

To assist staff and to provide any advice required in order to achieve compliance with these principles, the OFT has:

- a named member of staff whose role is the Data Protection coordinator, and

- the Information Access Team whose role is to help staff understand and apply the data protection principles in their day to day work and to provide any necessary training.

If you have any comments or require further advice on this policy statement please speak to Ian Bennett (Data Protection coordinator) on 020 7211 8801.

Cavendish Elithorn  
Chairman  
OFT Freedom of Information Group  
November 2007

This policy has been approved by the OFT Freedom of Information Group.