



Charity Commission

Information Charter - Our Personal Information Promise

Introduction

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. Our job as regulator is to work closely with charities to ensure that they are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations in order to promote public trust and confidence.

We are required by law to maintain, administer and display a public Register of Charities, although some special types of charity do not have to register. There are some 180,000 registered charities in England and Wales.

Purpose of this charter

This information charter sets out the standards you can expect from us when we request from or hold information, including but not limited to personal data, about you or your enquiries. The charter covers both personal data and other information we hold in connection with our duties under the Charities Acts. 'Personal data' is information that relates to identifiable living individuals. It does not include information relating to dead people, groups of people, organisations or businesses. The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the management of personal data.

It will tell you how you can get access to information, including your personal data and what you can do if you think standards are not being met. It will also assist any individual or organisation in contact with us to understand how the information concerning them is treated and when we will consider disclosing it.

Types of information

We hold both personal and non-personal information in a variety of databases and information stores which are critical to our regulatory activities, together with systems relating to our support functions such as human resources, facilities and finance.

How our information is managed

We manage, maintain and protect all information according to legislation, our policies and best practices. We have security measures in place to maintain and safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our systems and data. All information is stored, processed and communicated in a secure manner making it available to authorised users.

We are also committed to the proactive dissemination of information, to be open and transparent and will routinely publish information unless restricted by law or public policy considerations.

Personal information

We know how important it is to protect people's privacy and to comply with the Data Protection Act. We will safeguard your information and will act in accordance with the Data Protection Act when disclosing information. When we ask you for personal information, we will:

- let you know why we need it, where it is not obvious;
- only ask for what we need, and not to collect too much or irrelevant information;
- protect it and make sure nobody has access to it who should not; and
- not make your personal information available for commercial use without your permission (except where we are legally required to make the information publicly available for example the charity's contact's name and address on the Register of Charities.) The public register of charities is a database covered by the Re-Use of Public Sector Information regulations. We are obliged by law to provide copies of the publicly available information upon request. More information is available at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/index>

In return, we ask you to:

- give us accurate information; and
- tell us if there are any changes, such as a new address.

This helps us to keep your information reliable and up to date.

Personal Information Promise

To demonstrate our continued commitment to data protection, we have also signed up to the Information Commissioner's 'Personal Information Promise'.

Access to information

Our [Publication Scheme](#) provides an overview of the information that is available to access.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 also enables the public to have access to unpublished information from a public body subject to certain conditions. We are committed to the proactive dissemination of information to be open and transparent and will publish information unless restricted by legislation. Like all other public sector organisations we are required to make the information we hold available unless it is subject to an exemption.

Legislation – disclosure of information

We have a statutory duty to make available the information on the Register of Charities.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 have a number of exemptions which must be considered before publication or disclosure of other information that we hold. However, we will not withhold information simply because it falls into a relevant exemption. We will assess the impact of disclosure in relation to the requested information and make a decision on a case by case basis (except where we have decided that information of that type should be published proactively).

You can get more details on:

- [what information we collect and why we collect it;](#)
- [how we use your information;](#)
- [how to find out what information we hold about you and how to ask us to correct any mistakes;](#)
- [how to make a complaint.](#)

For more information please [contact us](#).

When we ask for your information, we will keep to the law, including the Data Protection Act 1998. For independent advice about data protection, privacy and data sharing issues, you can contact the Information Commissioner at:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 08456 306060 or 01625 545745

Fax: 01625 524510

Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Links to other websites

This Charter does not cover the links to any non Charity Commission websites contained within this document.