



Information charter

Purpose

This information charter sets out the standards that you can expect from the Ministry of Justice when we request or hold personal information about you; how you can get access to your personal data; and what you can do if you think standards are not being met.

About personal information

Personal 'data' is information that relates to living individuals. It does not include information relating to dead people, groups or communities of people, organisations or businesses.

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the management of personal information.

We need to handle personal information about you so that we can provide services for you. This is how we look after that information.

When we ask you for personal information we promise to:

- make sure you know why we need it; ask only for what we need and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- protect it and make sure no unauthorised person has access to it
- let you know if we share it with other organisations to give you better public services, and if you can say no
- make sure we don't keep it longer than is necessary
- not make your personal information available for commercial use without your consent
- consider your request to stop processing data about you.

In return we ask you to:

- give us accurate information
- tell us as soon as possible if there are any changes to your personal circumstances such as your address. This helps us to keep your information reliable and up-to-date.

You can get more details on:

- how to find out what information we hold about you and, in addition, you can ask us to correct any mistakes
- agreements we have with other organisations for sharing information
- circumstances where we can pass on personal information without telling you, for example, to help with the prevention or detection of crime or to produce anonymised statistics
- our instructions to staff on how to collect, use or delete your personal information
- how we check that the information we hold is accurate and up-to-date
- how to make a complaint.

More information

For more information, please contact dca.foi@justice.qsi.gov.uk by email or phone 020 7210 2190.

Fees

If you request your own personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998, this request is known as a 'subject access request' or 'SAR'. We will provide this upon receipt of a fee of £10.00, made payable to Her Majesty's Paymaster General. HMPG is an acceptable abbreviation.

Fees for information in other formats

You can ask for information to be in any reasonable format and in languages other than English but there may be an additional charge for this. We will discuss the likely cost of your request with you so that you can decide whether to go ahead.

If someone else has copyright on the information you want, you may have to pay them to use it. If so, this cost will be outside our control.

Other relevant information

Where the information you are seeking is contained in files that are not appropriately structured or referenced, it may not be easy to locate and to identify whether personal information is held or being used. We keep as little 'unstructured' information as possible, since it is difficult to access and use.

If you require access to information held in these 'unstructured' manual files, you should describe the information in a way that would allow us to find it. It will help us to process your subject access request if you can be as specific as possible about what you want. Even if you describe the information, we are not obliged to provide you with access to unstructured manual data if the cost of locating and extracting the information would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as set by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For organisations like the Ministry of Justice, this is currently £600 or 24 hours of staff time.

How to request personal information

Should you wish to make a subject access request about personal data held by the Prison Service, the Probation Service or the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), you should send it to:

Open Government Unit
Abell House
John Islip Street
London
SW1P 4LH

Alternatively, if your subject access request relates to personal data held in respect of any other services provided by the Ministry, you should send it to:

The Access Rights Unit
Ministry of Justice
6th Floor, Selborne House,
54–60 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QW

Complaints

When we ask you for information, we will keep to the law. If you consider that your information has been handled incorrectly you can contact the Information Commissioner 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: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
www.ico.gov.uk