



ICO's access to information strategy calls for better compliance by public authorities backed up with enforcement action

The ICO has today published ['Openness by Design'](#), its new access to information strategy.

The strategy sets out five goals relating to the suite of access to information legislation regulated by the ICO: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004, and the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015.

The five 'Openness by Design' goals are:

- Ensuring that access to information rights is upheld in a consistent and timely manner and operates effectively in a digital age.
- Providing excellent customer service to individuals making requests to us and lead by example in fulfilling our own statutory functions.
- Raising awareness of access to information rights and make it easier for the public to exercise their rights.
- Promoting the reform of access to information legislation so it remains relevant for our modern society and fit for purpose.
- Further developing and sustaining our international collaboration, learning from the best initiatives around the world.

The ICO's ambition is to increase the impact of its regulation of access to information legislation. The ICO will encourage public authorities to comply with the law in the first instance, reducing the need for people to complain to the regulator. Where necessary, the ICO will take enforcement action and make full use of its spectrum of powers.

Elizabeth Denham, Information Commissioner said:

"Access to information goes to the heart of a healthy, functioning digital democracy and has a key role to play in an era of increasing public expectation of meaningful government transparency."

The strategy commits to continue to promote the reform of access to information laws as set out in the ICO's [Outsourcing Oversight?](#) report published earlier this year and to take steps to raise awareness of access to information rights.

The strategy, which runs until 2022, will be continually assessed to ensure it aligns with the [ICO's Information Rights Strategic Plan](#). Progress against the goals will be reported in the Information Commissioner's Annual Report.

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner's Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.
2. In addition to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, [the ICO regulates further legislation](#) including the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation 2003.
3. The ICO called for an extension to the scope of access to information legislation, to include private contractors carrying out public functions, in its [Outsourcing oversight?](#) report laid before Parliament on 28 January 2019.
4. To report a concern to the ICO telephone our helpline 0303 123 1113 or go to ico.org.uk/concerns.