



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

Date: 15 April 2008

### **Community councils told to comply with the Data Protection Act**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is reminding community councils in Scotland of their obligations under the Data Protection Act (DPA).

Ken Macdonald, Assistant Commissioner for Scotland at the ICO, has written to every Community Council Liaison Officer in Scotland to remind them of their obligations under the Act and to explain why most community councils should notify their processing with the ICO.

Notification costs £35 per annum and should be made directly to the Information Commissioner's Office, based in Wilmslow. Registering is easy and takes only a few minutes on the ICO website. Under the Act, most organisations that process individuals' personal information electronically must notify with the ICO. Failure to notify is an offence and recently there have been a number of successful prosecutions of organisations for failing to notify.

Ken Macdonald said: "Compliance with data protection principles ensures that individuals' personal information is secure, accurate, up-to-date and processed fairly and community councils must be aware of their responsibilities. Notification is an important legal requirement of the DPA but there has been some confusion among community councils over whether they are covered by the voluntary or not-for-profit exemptions under the Act. However, whilst community councillors are volunteers, the community councils have specific powers set out in law and therefore are not considered to be not-for-profit organisations."

In order to simplify the notification process, the ICO has set up an online template for use by Scottish community councils. The ICO is also working with both the Scottish Government and the Association of Scottish Community Councils to develop guidance for community councils.

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)
3. For further advice, local authorities should contact the Information Commissioner's Office in Scotland on 0131 225 6341. Further advice on notification should be sought from the Notification Helpline on 01625 545 740.
4. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles, which make sure that personal information is:
  - Fairly and lawfully processed
  - Processed for limited purposes
  - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
  - Accurate and up to date
  - Not kept for longer than is necessary
  - Processed in line with your rights
  - Secure
  - Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection