

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST

Privacy Factsheet



PRIVACY is rarely the first thing we think about when providing a company or organisation with personal information. Whether it is filling out a form for your local council to pay council tax or providing details online to build a social media profile. Public and private organisations now hold huge amounts of information about us. This can include our name, address, date of birth, telephone number, email address and banking details. You have a right to know what information is held about you and by whom. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you can request to see a copy of the information that an organisation holds on you. This is called a Subject Access Request.

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Who might have your personal data?

Any organisation you have provided your data to retains that information. This can include public authorities, such as local councils or police forces, or private companies, such as credit card companies, social media companies, email providers, internet service providers, insurance companies, and loyalty cards.

Government departments such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the National Health Service (NHS), the Driving and Vehicle Licence Authority (DVLA), UK Visas & Immigration, Identity & Passport Service may also hold data on you.

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Why would you want to access your personal data?

If you have a **complaint** with a company or organisation, if you suspect information held on you may be incorrect or if you have a legal concern.

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Your right to access information you have shared

Under the Data Protection Act we all have the right to make a Subject Access Request to see the information which is held on us by a "data controller" – i.e. the company, business or organisation which you have given your data to. The "subject" of a Subject Access Request is you.

Whilst you have the right to a copy of information held about you, some information cannot be shared - specifically information which relates to another person. If you want to access information about another person you will need to seek permission from them to do so.

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Making a Subject Access Request

To make a Subject Access Request you need to write a letter to the organisation who you have given data to. We have drafted a template which you can download [here](#).

Some organisations enable you to send one via their website or email, so it is worth checking their website for details of how they will accept requests first.

Some companies such as credit reference agencies, actively encourage you to make a Subject Access Request. In this instance it is referred to as a credit report.

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Some things to consider when making a request

It is important to include as much information as possible as this will make it easier and hopefully quicker for the organisation to locate all the data requested.

It is worth considering sending your request by recorded delivery. This will provide you with proof that your letter has been received by the organisation.

It is advisable to keep a copy of the letter you send and any correspondence you receive, in case you need to make further contact with the organisation.

Some organisations require you to provide proof of identity and proof of address when you send your Subject Access Request. This could be a copy of a bank statement, passport, driver's license or utility bill. This is to prove that the person making the request is the same person as the data subject which the request has been made.

It is standard practice for you to pay a small fee. This helps towards the cost of retrieving your data and the cost of sending it back to you. A fee of £10 is the norm. There are some exceptions, such as health and education records, which can cost as much as £50. Credit reference agencies will charge a smaller fee; usually £2.

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How long will it take?

Most organisations will reply within 40 days. A credit reference agency must provide information to you within 7 working days.

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Further guidance

You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office if you experience any difficulties in getting your information. www.ico.org.uk or 08456 306060.

If you wish to make an online subject access request regarding the Police National Computer or personal data that your local police force may have you can visit: https://www.acro.police.uk/subject_access.aspx

For subject access requests across government departments please visit the relevant government department website where a subject access request form can be downloaded.

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Don't forget

- Any organisation which has asked you to provide them with personal data will have retained information on you.
- Under the Data Protection Act 1998 we all have the right to make a Subject Access Request to see the information which is held.
- You may need to provide additional information about yourself, including proof of name and address, and pay a small fee for a Subject Access Request.
- If you have problems accessing your information, contact the Information Commissioner's Office.