

Freedom of Information Policy

We will comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). There are 2 ways in which the public can access information held by us; through this website, or by directly requesting information (Fol Requests). For a request to be valid under the Act it must be in writing, contain the requestors real name and an address for correspondence, together with a description of the information they are requesting access to. Requesters do not have to mention the Act or direct their request to a designated employee. Any letter or email to a public authority asking for information may be a valid request under the Act. Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority and they do not have to provide a reason for their request. All requests for information will be centrally managed by the Fol lead within the Corporate Services Department. The Fol lead is responsible for ensuring all requests are responded to in accordance with the Act, the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Act and guidance issued by the Information Commissioner (ICO). Due to the nature of our business, it is likely that we hold information on behalf of clients which are also public authorities subject to the Act. Requests from client organisations for information we hold on their behalf will be centrally managed by the Fol lead.

The Act contains exemptions that allow a public authority to withhold information following a request. In some instances there is an option to refuse to confirm or deny whether the information being requested is held or not. The Fol lead will be consulted when the application of an exemption to disclosure is being considered.

Any person who has requested information from us, which has been dealt with under the Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review of their request for information if they are dissatisfied with the response. Requests for review of Freedom of Information requests must be made in writing to:

Head of RISC
UK SBS
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN2 1FF

Email: DPA-FOI@uksbs.co.uk

The request for review should include the reference number, date of request and details of why the review is being requested. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Data Protection Officer within 42 calendar days (6 weeks) of the response to the original request.

Any request for review will be acknowledged in writing, confirming the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by the Head of Risk, Information and Security Compliance (RISC), who is senior to and independent of the original decision maker. The Head of RISC will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as practical, with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days. The Head of RISC will conduct a review of the handling of the request and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempted information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the requestor. On completion of the review, the Head of RISC will reply to the requestor with the result of the review. If the requestor is still dissatisfied following the review they are advised to contact the Information Commissioner to appeal the decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted using the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700

The ICO conducts investigations into complaints from members of the public who believe that a public authority has not responded to a request for information within the provisions of the Act. It is a criminal offence to deliberately destroy, conceal or alter requested information to prevent its release under the Act. Any person subject to our Data Protection Policy who destroys, conceals or alters requested information may be subject to disciplinary action in addition to any steps taken by the ICO.

Our Freedom of Information Policy, and the way in which it is implemented, will be regularly reviewed.