

**Report on
Information Commissioner's Office
Annual Track**

2006

Individuals

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***Celebrating over 15 years of Excellence
In Consultation 1991 - 2006***

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Contents

CONTENTS	2
1.0. INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
3.0 METHODOLOGY	6
4.0 RESULTS	8
APPENDICES	30

1.0. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the Data Protection Act came into force in 1998, the Information Commissioner's Office has monitored awareness of this legislation amongst organisations and individuals about whom information is held.
- 1.2 In addition to this, the Freedom of Information Act was passed in 2000, and was enforced at the start of 2005. This Act governs public authorities only and research is undertaken to monitor awareness this Act amongst public authorities and individuals. The Information Commissioner's Office also requires research to measure awareness and understanding of the Freedom of Information Act amongst individuals.
- 1.3 In summary, the work covered the following groups:
 - 1 Organisations - Data controllers for data protection (public and private sectors) and public authorities only for freedom of information
 - 2 Individuals - i.e. the general public
- 1.4 This report contains the result for 2004/05/06 specifically relating to individuals. The objectives were;
 - i) Data Protection Act. To measure awareness, understanding, relevance, perceptions of the Act, plus importance of specific matters relating to personal information and their use of it.
 - ii) Freedom of Information Act. To measure awareness, understanding, behaviour, and relevance of the Freedom of Information Act to individuals.
 - iii) Information Commissioner's Office. To measure the Information Commissioner's Office's reputation, effectiveness and their understanding of from the perspective of the audiences.

2.0 Executive Summary

Data Protection

- 2.1 There is greater awareness of the right to see information about individuals by organisations (82% compared to 76% in 2005 and 74% in 2004).
- 2.2 The UK population is becoming increasingly concerned about all social issues. However, there has been no change in the percentage of individuals concerned with the protection of personal information.
- 2.3 Protecting people's personal information was ranked fourth (third in 2005) for concern as an issue of social importance, being ranked above national security, environmental and unemployment issues.
- 2.4 There has been an increase in concern with consequences of mishandled data, with threat to personal safety remaining the main concern.
- 2.5 People's perception that they have lost control over the way their information is collected and processed has increased. The perception that existing laws and practices provide sufficient protection of individuals' personal information has also increased.
- 2.6 However, the view that organisations handle the information they collect about customers in a fair and proper way has also increased.
- 2.7 A high level of sensitivity was attached to financial data, health information and personal contact details.
- 2.8 Concerns with regard to organisations using personal information have increased.
- 2.9 86% have not requested to see personal information though 64% would consider doing so.

Freedom of Information

- 2.10 73% of individuals recognised that FOI gave them the right to request information held by government and other public bodies.
- 2.11 The perception that information held by the government and other public authorities is available has increased.
- 2.12 The majority of the population (95%) have not requested to see any information held by a public authority at this stage. Of those that have or would request to see information held by public authorities, almost half would do so for personal reasons, as in 2005.
- 2.13 There has been an increase in terms of those agreeing with the positive benefits associated with the Freedom of Information Act.

- 2.14 There has been an increase in awareness of the Freedom of Information Act (prompted). There has been little change in the awareness of the right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities, yet awareness is high given the infancy of the Act.

Source of Advice

- 2.15 The Citizens Advice Bureau remains the main source for advice on data protection (52%) or Freedom of Information (43%) followed by a solicitor or the internet.

ICO

- 2.16 The majority of respondents (82%) had not heard of the Information Commissioner. Of those who had, 39% felt that their role was to enforce the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

Demographic Trends

- 2.17 Almost two-thirds (64%) of the Northern Ireland booster respondents felt that they had the right to see information held about them by organisations, an increase of 28% since 2005.
- 2.18 There was greater awareness of “the right to see information held about you by organisations” among AB / C1 respondents and a greater percentage of DE respondents felt that they had no rights regarding their personal information held by organisations.
- 2.20 A greater percentage of AB respondents have heard or seen about the Data Protection Act through work and TV whilst a greater percentage of DE respondents were aware of Data Protection Act in newspapers or magazines.
- 2.21 A significantly higher percentage (+10%) of AB and C1 respondents have requested to see information held by organisations than C2 and DE respondents and a greater percentage of AB respondents would like to consider using their right to see information held by organisations.
- 2.22 A higher percentage of AB respondents (+15%) would use the internet to get advice on their rights under Data Protection Act compared to DE respondents.
- 2.23 A greater percentage of AB and C1 respondents have heard or seen about the Freedom of Information Act through work, whilst a greater percentage of C2 and DE respondents have heard or seen it in the newspaper or magazines and TV.

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 As in previous years, the consultation was undertaken by telephone. All the interviews were conducted in house by SMSR's telephone interviewing team.
- 3.2 The total sample was 1,066 interviews. Quotas were set on age, sex, region and social grade to ensure a nationally representative sample was achieved. The quotas were set as below:

Area	Quota	Achieved
North West	11.4%	10.9%
North East	4.3%	4.9%
Yorkshire and Humber	8.4%	8.7%
East Midlands	7.1%	7.8%
West Midlands	9.0%	9.1%
East	9.2%	8.8%
London	12.2%	11.6%
South East	13.6%	12.1%
South West	8.4%	8.4%
Wales	4.9%	5.4%
Scotland	8.6%	8.7%
Northern Ireland ¹	2.9%	3.5%
Age	Quota	Achieved
18 - 24	11.0%	10.7%
25- 34	18.4%	17.2%
35 – 44	19.3%	17.2%
45 – 54	17.1%	17.2%
55 – 64	13.7%	14.5%
65 and over	20.5%	21.3%

¹ A booster sample of 100 was undertaken for Northern Ireland although results are not included in the overall results. However, the figures for these respondents are discussed separately within the report.

3.3 Social Economic Status of respondents were as follows:

Social Economic Status	%
AB	21%
C1	26%
C2	21%
DE	23%
Refused	9%

3.4 Subject contact data was collected via the Names and Numbers ADF software.

Questionnaires

3.5 The questionnaires were developed from the previous years' to ensure comparability although revised where necessary in conjunction with BDH & the Information Commissioner's Office extensively piloted and amended accordingly.

3.6 The questionnaires covered the tracking questions to supply the necessary data for the information published in the Information Commissioner's Office annual report.

4.0 Results

The results are discussed for three main subjects:

- 1 General Social issues
- 2 Data Protection Act
- 3 Freedom of Information Act
- 4 Information Commissioner's Office

4.1 General Social issues

Concerns with issues of social importance

4.1.1 Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were with the following issues on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is not at all concerned and 5 is very concerned. There has been an increase in concern regarding all aspects since 2005, with the exception of “protecting people’s personal information” and “improving standards in education”. Preventing crime remains the area which individuals are most concerned.

Concerns with issues of social importance			
Concerned²	2004	2005	2006
Preventing crime	85%	88%	93%
The National Health Service	78%	83%	90%
Equal rights for everyone	69%	81%	85%
Protecting people's personal information	70%	83%	83%
National security	71%	78%	82%
Improving standards in education	76%	84%	81%
Protecting freedom of speech	67%	80%	81%
Environmental issues	66%	74%	77%
Unemployment	50%	70%	72%
Access to information held by public authorities	48%	66%	68%

4.1.2 Levels of concern increase with the respondents' age.

4.1.3 In terms of socio-economic groups, a lower percentage of AB respondents were concerned about unemployment in terms of social importance.

² % concerned refers to those stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of concern, with 5 being very concerned.

4.2 Data Protection

4.2.1 The Data Protection Act results are given under the following headings:

- Concerns with issues of social importance
- Concerns with consequences of mishandled data
- Current perceptions of information handling
- Awareness of rights to access personal information
- Sensitivities with different types of personal information
- Concerns with regard to organisations using personal information
- Awareness of laws relating to the handling of personal information
- Awareness of the Data Protection Act
- Sources of awareness of the Data Protection Act
- Requests for personal information
- Source of advice on the rights under the Data Protection Act

Concerns with consequences of mishandled data

4.2.2 Respondents were asked to state, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all concerned and 5 extremely concerned), how concerned they were that mishandled information could lead to certain situations. Threat to personal safety was still respondents' main concern. All concerns have increased since 2005 with the exception of "threat to health".³ "Invasion of Privacy" was not an option in 2004 and 2005.

Concerns with consequences of mishandled data			
Concerned⁴	2004	2005	2006
Threat to your personal safety	71%	80%	87%
Threat to your health	69%	79%	87%
Invasion of Privacy	n/a	n/a	85%
Financial loss	63%	78%	85%
Loss of liberty	65%	77%	83%
Personal distress	53%	72%	80%
Indignity	47%	65%	74%
Annoyance or inconvenience	41%	65%	68%

4.2.3 AB respondents were less concerned that annoyance or inconvenience would be a possible consequence of organisations not handling information correctly.

³ It should be noted that different scales were used in 2004 (scale of 1 to 10)

⁴ % concerned refers to those respondents stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of concern, with 5 being extremely concerned

Current perceptions of information handling

- 4.2.4 Respondents were asked to state to what extent they agreed with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree).
- 4.2.5 Almost two third of respondents (63%) agreed that individuals have lost control over the way their information is collected and processed compared to 58% in 2005. Almost half of respondents agreed that: organisations handle the information they collect about their customers in a fair and proper way and that existing laws and organisational practices provide sufficient protection of individuals' personal information. All agreement levels have increased since 2004 and 2005.
- 4.2.6 Levels of agreement have increased for all the statements relating to information handling. Evidently, perceptions relating to loss of control are not attributed to the belief that there are no systems (either organisational or legislative) in place.

Agree⁵	2004	2005	2006
Individuals have lost control over the way their information is collected and processed	53%	58%	63%
Existing laws and organisation practices provide sufficient protection of individuals' personal information	40%	40%	49%
Organisations handle the information they collect about their customers in a fair and proper way	42%	40%	47%

⁵ % agree refers to those respondents stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of agreement, with 5 being strongly agree.

Awareness of rights to access personal information

4.2.7 Respondents were asked to indicate what rights they had relating to accessing personal information, 45% felt that they had the right to see information held about them by organisations, an increase of 6% since 2005. One quarter of respondents were unsure what rights they had, compared to 24% last year. Like last year, 5% stated that they do not have any rights. However, there was a decrease of 7% of those who felt they had the right to see information held by public authorities about their operations and activities and a decrease of 3% of those who thought they have a right to correct information about themselves that is wrong.

Awareness of rights to access personal information			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
You have the right to see information held about you by organisations	39%	39%	45%
Not sure what rights we have	9%	24%	25%
You have a right to see information held by public authorities / public bodies about their operations and activities	17%	12%	5%
We do not have any rights	10%	5%	5%
You have the right to correct information about you that is wrong	8%	6%	3%

4.2.8 Almost two-thirds (64%) of the Northern Ireland booster respondents felt that they had the right to see information held about them by organisations, an increase of 28% since 2005 and only 8% were unsure about what rights they have compared to 27% in 2005.

4.2.9 There was greater awareness of “the right to see information held about you by organisations” among AB / C1 respondents.

4.2.10 A list of rights, some of which were actual legal rights, were mentioned to the respondents and levels of awareness on each mentioned right have increased since 2005. This included the three actual rights ('you have a right to see information held about you by organisations', 'you have a right to correct information about you that is wrong' and 'you have rights regarding information held about you by organisations'). However, over half of respondents (55%) were unsure what right they have which is an 18% increase compared to 2005.

Awareness of rights to access personal information			
<i>(prompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
You have a right to see information held about you by organisations	74%	76%	82%
You have a right to correct information about you that is wrong	77%	63%	82%
You have rights regarding information held about you by organisations	69%	52%	78%
You have a right to see information held by public authorities / public bodies about their operations and activities	63%	55%	71%
You have a right to delete information held about you that you are unhappy with	50%	40%	61%
Not sure what rights you have	38%	37%	55%
You have a right to be paid by organisations who pass on information	29%	29%	40%
You do not have any rights	7%	4%	16%

4.2.11 The majority of respondents that were aware of the Data Protection Act (84%) were aware of the right to see information held about them by an organisation compared to 69% that were not aware of the Act.

4.2.12 A greater percentage of DE respondents felt that they had no rights regarding their personal information held by organisations.

4.2.13 A greater percentage of C2 and DE respondents felt that:

- They had the right to be paid by organisations that pass on information about them
- felt that they had the right to correct information that is wrong about them
- felt that they had the right to delete information held that they were unhappy with

4.2.14 77% of the Northern Ireland booster respondents, when prompted, felt that they had the right to see information held about them by organisations, compared to 90% in 2005.

Sensitivities with different types of personal information

4.2.15 Financial data was considered the most sensitive (88%) and more than two-thirds of respondents mentioned health information, personal contact details and sexual life information.

Sensitivities with different types of personal information	
<i>(prompted)</i>	2006
Financial data	88.0%
Health information	72.0%
Personal contact details	68.0%
Sexual life information	67.0%
Biometric information	63.0%
Genetic information	63.0%
Criminal records	58.0%
Clickstream data	43.0%
Political opinions	42.0%
Education qualification	42.0%
Data concerning race or ethnic origin	41.0%
Employment history	41.0%
Membership of political party/organisation	38.0%
Religious or philosophical beliefs	37.0%
Trade-union membership	33.0%

4.2.16 Older respondents were more sensitive with all these issues compared to younger respondents.

4.2.17 A lower percentage of AB respondents felt that the following areas were extremely sensitive compared to other socio-economic groups:

- Financial data
- Criminal records
- Genetic information
- Sexual life information
- Education qualifications

4.2.18 A greater percentage of C2 and DE respondents felt that religious or philosophical beliefs were extremely sensitive.

Concerns with regard to organisations using personal information

4.2.19 Almost half of respondents (49%) were concerned with organisations passing their details onto unknown organisations; this is a 3% decrease since 2005. All other concerns have increased since 2005 with the exception of the concern about sending unwanted e-mails and text messages.

Concern with regard to organisations using personal information			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
Passing on my details to unknown organisations	45%	52%	49%
Making unwanted phone calls	9%	18%	28%
Not telling me what information they hold or why	8%	18%	19%
Sending unwanted mail or faxes	14%	16%	17%
Have no worries	5%	6%	12%
Making decisions on incorrect information	13%	9%	11%
Sending unwanted e-mails	4%	10%	9%
Sending my information abroad	3%	2%	7%
Sending unwanted text messages	2%	6%	5%
Holding information on what I buy	2%	1%	5%
Tracking what I look at on the internet	1%	2%	3%

4.2.20 Other 'main concerns' related to fraud (5% overall) and personal lack of control over data (2% overall).

4.2.21 Almost three quarters (74%) of the Northern Ireland booster respondents were concerned about the passing of details onto unknown organisations, an increase of 19% since 2005. 36% were concerned with not knowing what information is held and 33% with unwanted mail or faxes.

4.2.22 Respondents were then asked whether the following concerned them with regard to organisations using personal information.

Concern with regard to organisations using personal information		
Concerned⁶ (prompted)	2005	2006
Passing or selling information on to other organisations without your permission	85%	95%
Not keeping the information securely so it is at risk of being stolen or getting into the wrong hands	85%	94%
Passing your information on to other countries without adequate data protection	85%	93%
Not collecting information in a secure way	83%	93%
Using information for purposes other than that for which is intended	84%	92%
Requesting too much personal information	77%	88%
Holding inaccurate or out of date information	74%	88%
Requesting inappropriate information that is not relevant	72%	83%
Holding information for longer than is required	69%	83%

4.2.23 The same issue 'passing or selling information onto other organisations without your permission' attracted the highest score (95%) from the prompted concern list. All concerns have increased since 2005.

4.2.24 A lower percentage of AB respondents were concerned about their personal information being held longer than is required by organisations.

4.2.25 In 2004 respondents were asked whether they were concerned on a level of 1-10 with issues relating to organisations using their personal information. However, these figures cannot be compared with this year as the rating scale and options differ.

⁶ % concerned refers to those stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of concern, with 5 being very concerned.

Awareness of laws relating to the handling of personal information

4.2.26 The Data Protection Act was correctly identified by 31% of respondents, a decrease of 9% since 2005.

<i>Awareness of laws relating to the handling of personal information</i>			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
Data Protection Act	42%	40%	31%
Freedom of Information Act	3%	6%	5%
Environmental Information Regulations	n / a	0.7%	1%
Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations	1%	0.7%	0.8%
Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002	n / a ⁷	n / a	0.2%
None	54%	57%	66%

4.2.27 43% of the Northern Ireland booster group mentioned the Data Protection Act, compared to 23% in 2005.

4.2.28 There was greater unprompted awareness of the Data Protection Act among AB respondents.

⁷ Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 was not an option in 2004 and 2005.

Awareness of the Data Protection Act

4.2.29 The majority of respondents were aware of the Data Protection Act, when prompted with an increase of 4% since 2005.

<i>Awareness of the Data Protection Act</i>			
<i>(prompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
Yes	90	84	88
No	10	16	12

4.2.30 Awareness of the Data Protection Act was greatest among individuals in the East Midlands (94%) while awareness was the lowest among those in Yorkshire/Humberside (80%). However, 89% of the Northern Ireland booster respondents were aware of the Data Protection Act, compared to 80% in 2005.

4.2.31 Levels of awareness of the Data Protection Act (prompted) are highest among AB respondent (94%) and lowest among DE respondents (83%).

Sources of awareness of the Data Protection Act

4.2.32 Almost one third of respondents (32%) were made aware of the Data Protection Act through work, an increase of 5% since 2005. Over a quarter had seen the Data Protection Act on the television and newspapers or magazines. However, the levels of awareness through radio, terms and conditions/financial applications, internet and Jobcentre have decreased since 2005.

Sources of awareness of the Data Protection Act		
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2005 (839)	2006 (937)
Through work	27%	32%
TV	25%	26%
Newspapers / magazines	23%	26%
Radio	11%	6%
Terms and conditions / financial applications	11%	10%
Internet	8%	5%
Friends / relatives	7%	5%
Through Education	7%	5%
Jobcentre	3%	1%

4.2.33 A greater percentage of AB respondents have heard or seen about the Data Protection Act through work and TV whilst a greater percentage of DE respondents were aware of Data Protection Act in newspapers or magazines.

Requests for personal information

- 4.2.34 Of the sample, 86% had *not* requested personal information although 64% would consider doing so.
- 4.2.35 A significantly higher percentage (+10%) of AB and C1 respondents have requested to see information held by organisations than C2 and DE respondents.
- 4.2.36 A greater percentage of AB respondents would like to consider using their right to see information held by organisations.
- 4.2.37 Of those who had requested personal information, only 7% requested to see information as a matter of routine and 18% did so to occasionally check something specific. Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) requested information rarely as circumstances dictate.
- 4.2.38 A greater percentage of AB respondents requested to see information rarely.
- 4.2.39 Of those who have or would request personal information, over a third of respondents indicated that they did or would do so for general interest. A fifth would do so if applying for financial credit. Main responses are shown below:

Requests for personal information		
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2005	2006
General interest	32%	35%
Applying for financial credit	14%	20%
Being refused financial credit	18%	14%
To check medical records	13%	12%
No circumstances	5%	5%

(Base: 732)

- 4.2.40 Almost a fifth (16%) of those aware of the Data Protection Act had requested to see information compared to 5% of those unaware of the Act.
- 4.2.41 Requesting information was greatest among respondents in Northern Ireland (22%) and the lowest in Wales (5%). However, three quarters of respondents in Northern Ireland would be willing to request information.

Source of advice on the rights under the Data Protection Act

4.2.42 Respondents were asked where they would go to get advice on their rights under the Data Protection Act. Over half of respondents mentioned the Citizens Advice Bureau. The main responses are shown in the table below.

Source of advice on the rights under the Data Protection Act	
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2006
Citizens Advice Bureau	52%
Solicitor	14%
Internet	14%
Public library	3%
Local MP or MSP/Councillor/Assembly member	2%
Police	1%
Information Commissioner's Office	1%

4.2.43 A higher percentage of AB respondents (+15%) would use the internet to get advice on their rights under Data Protection Act compared to DE respondents.

4.3 Freedom of Information

4.3.1 Results covered the following issues:

- Awareness of rights relating to accessing information held by the Government and other public authorities
- Current perceptions of information handling
- Awareness of laws regarding access to information held by the Government and other public authorities
- Requests for information held by the Government and other public authorities
- Trust in public authorities
- Benefits of being able to access information held by public authorities
- Contact for advice

Awareness of rights relating to accessing information held by the Government and other public authorities

4.3.2 Respondents were asked to identify any rights of which they were aware, to enable them to access information held by the Government and other public authorities.

Awareness of rights relating to accessing information held by the Government and other public authorities		
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2005	2006
The right to request own personal information	36%	31%
The right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities	23%	25%
The right to request information about the environment	9%	5%
The right to see what public money is being spent on	7%	4%
The right to know what type of information is available from the Government and other public authorities	6%	4%
The right to request other people's personal information	4%	3%
The right to find out about issues relating to national security	3%	2%
The right to see official information from the Government and other public authorities such as minutes and planning documents	2%	2%

4.3.3 Almost 29% of those aware of the Freedom of Information Act were aware of the right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities. Only 19% of those who were unaware of the Act were aware of this right.

4.3.4 Fourteen per cent of the Northern Ireland booster sample mentioned the right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities.

4.3.5 Respondents were then asked to state which of the following rights they had. Almost three quarters of respondents were aware that they had the right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities. Almost 75% of those aware of the Freedom of Information Act were aware of this right compared to 69% of those unaware of the Act.

Awareness of rights relating to accessing information held by the Government and other public authorities		
<i>(prompted)</i>	2005	2006
The right to request own personal information	87%	87%
The right to request information about the environment	80%	75%
The right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities	73%	73%
The right to see what public money is being spent on	81%	72%
The right to know what type of information is available from the Government and other public authorities	76%	67%
The right to see official information from the Government and other public authorities such as minutes and planning documents	55%	50%
The right to find out about issues relating to national security	45%	39%
The right to request other people's personal information	7%	8%

Current perceptions of information handling

4.3.6 Almost half of the respondents (49%) agreed that information held by the Government or other public authorities about their operations was available. Agreement levels have increased since 2004 and 2005.

Agree⁸	2004	2005	2006
Information held by the government and other public authorities about their operations is available	38%	41%	49%

Comment: This is FOI and needs to be in the FOI bit

⁸ % agree refers to those respondents stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of agreement, with 5 being strongly agree.

Awareness of laws regarding access to information held by public authorities

4.3.7 When asked to identify any laws regarding access to information held by public authorities, 11% stated the Freedom of Information Act. This was the same in 2005.

<i>Awareness of laws relating to the handling of personal information</i>			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
Freedom of Information Act	5%	11%	11%
Data Protection Act	11%	11%	10%
Open Government Code	1%	0.2%	0.2%
Environmental Information Regulations	1%	0.4%	0.4%
None	50%	28%	29%

4.3.8 Unprompted awareness of the Freedom of Information Act was greatest among AB respondents (24%) and lowest among C2 respondents (6%).

4.3.9 Nine per cent of the Northern Ireland booster respondents were aware of the Freedom of Information Act unprompted.

4.3.10 When prompted, 62% of all respondents had heard of the Freedom of Information Act, a 6% increase since 2005, 68% of those who were aware of the Data Protection Act were also aware of the Freedom of Information Act. Only 15% of those unaware of the Data Protection Act were aware of the Freedom of Information Act.

4.3.11 Male respondents had a greater awareness of the Freedom of Information Act (+17%).

4.3.12 Awareness of the Freedom of Information Act was highest among respondents in Northern Ireland (76%) whilst awareness was lowest in Yorkshire/Humberside (44%), London (43%) and Wales (43%). 65% of the Northern Ireland booster sample was aware of the Freedom of Information Act when prompted compared to 53% in 2005.

4.3.13 More than a third (41%) of respondents who were aware of the Freedom of Information Act had heard about the Act through television, 38% via newspapers and magazines and 10% via the radio. The main sources remain the same as in 2005 and the internet becomes another main source of awareness of the Freedom of Information Act in 2006.

Source of awareness of the Freedom of Information Act			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
TV	41%	43%	41%
Newspapers / magazines	46%	39%	38%
Radio	12%	18%	10%
Through work	5%	14%	19%
Friends / relatives	4%	6%	4%
Internet	n/a	4%	4%

4.3.14 A greater percentage of AB and C1 respondents have heard or seen about the Freedom of Information Act through work, whilst a greater percentage of C2 and DE respondents have heard or seen it in the newspaper or magazines and TV.

Requests for information held by the Government and other public authorities

4.3.15 The vast majority of respondents (95%) had not requested to see any information held by the Government or other public authorities although 52% of these would consider doing so in the future.

4.3.16 Of those who have requested to see information held by the Government, over 58% did so rarely, as circumstances dictated, and 16% requested information occasionally to check something specific. No one requested to see information regularly as a matter of routine.

4.3.17 Of those who had or would like to request information, 46% had done so or would consider doing so for personal reasons, 15% for general interest, 8% for house planning and 7% for medical information.

Requests for Information		
	2005	2006
Personal Reasons	47%	46%
General interest	12%	15%
House/ planning	8%	8%
Medical information	11%	7%
Environmental	4%	5%
Local knowledge	5%	4%
To discover corruption or maladministration	4%	4%
In relation to a complaint	4%	3%
Employment	4%	2%

4.3.18 Request for information held by the Government was the highest among respondents in East Midlands (11%) and the lowest in Yorkshire/Humberside (1%). Willingness to request information was lowest in Yorkshire/Humberside (33%), whilst 62% of respondents in South East indicated that they would like to request information.

Benefits of being able to access information held by public authorities

4.3.19 All levels of agreement have increased since 2005 with the most significant being an increase in agreement with the statement that the Freedom of Information Act increases confidence in public authorities and provides more opportunities to have a say and contribute.

Benefits of being able to access information held by public authorities			
Agree⁹	2004	2005	2006
Increases knowledge of what public authorities do	54%	62%	76%
Promotes accountability and transparency in public authorities	53%	58%	74%
Increases confidence in public authorities	51%	55%	72%
Provides more opportunities to have a say and contribute	49%	55%	72%
Increases trust in public authorities	51%	57%	69%

Contact for advice

4.3.20 The Citizen's Advice Bureau remains the main contact for seeking advice on the Data Protection and / or Freedom of Information Acts as in 2005, although there has been a slight decline from 48% in 2005 to 43% in 2006.

Contact for advice on the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information Act			
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2004	2005	2006
Citizen's Advice Bureau	50%	48%	43%
Internet	13%	18%	14%
Solicitor	15%	13%	11%
Local MP / Councillor	9%	6%	6%

4.3.21 Sixteen respondents (2%) stated that they will go to the Information Commissioner's Office to get advice on their rights under the Freedom of Information Act. When being asked how they would prefer to receive advice and guidance, 4 respondents said they would prefer a letter.

⁹ % agree refers to those respondents stating 4 or 5 on the scale in terms of agreement, with 5 being strongly agree.

4.4 ICO

Awareness of the ICO

- 4.4.1 Although 15% of respondents had heard of the Information Commissioner, the majority of respondents (82%) had not and 3% remained unsure. There is little change since 2005.
- 4.4.2 Less than one tenth (7%) of the Northern Ireland booster respondents were aware of the Information Commissioner, a 6% decrease since 2005.
- 4.4.3 Over a third of respondents had seen information about the Information Commissioner's Office in newspapers and magazines, over a quarter in TV programmes and 8% on the radio. Of those respondents (17%) who stated other sources, 70% (12% overall) mentioned work as a source. It is interesting to note that a significantly higher percentage (+20%) of male respondents had seen information about the Information Commissioner in newspapers and magazines compared to females.

Source of information regarding the Information Commissioner's Office		
<i>(prompted)</i>	2005	2006
Newspapers / Magazines	36%	34%
TV Programme	22%	29%
Internet	9%	8%
Radio	11%	6%
Leaflet	7%	1%

- 4.4.4 Over a third of respondents who were aware of the Information Commissioner felt that its role was to enforce the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. 3 respondents felt that its role was to help people with complaints.

Role of the Information Commissioner		
<i>(unprompted)</i>	2005	2006
To enforce the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts	34%	39%
To protect individuals' personal information	10%	14%
To safeguard information rights by providing individuals and organisations with information and guidance	14%	11%
To enhance awareness and understanding of the Data Protection Act & Freedom of Information Act	15%	6%
To promote public access to official information	13%	5%
To take legal action when the law is broken	2%	4%
To advise on publications schemes	0.7%	2%
To register organisations under the Data Protection Act	2%	1%

APPENDICES

1 Questionnaire

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____ and I am calling from SMSR Ltd, an independent market research company.

We are conducting a study to find out how people feel about the way organisations hold and use information about them. Everybody has personal information including your name, your bank account number or even your medical details and we want to know how people feel about organisations holding such details. We also want to find out how people feel about the information available from public authorities regarding the way they run their organisations.

The interview will last approximately 12 minutes.

I'd like to emphasise we are not selling anything, this is purely research and you will not receive any follow-ups from this research.

SMSR work to the MRS Code of Conduct, which means we cannot identify you or show anybody outside of SMSR your questionnaire. Your views will be reported mixed-in with others.

Your call maybe monitored or recorded for quality control purposes but this will not be used for any other reason than this research.

INTERVIEWER ONLY READ OUT IF RESPONDENT SHOWS CONCERN.

If you wish to check the validity of this research please ring SMSR's freephone number is 0800 1380845 or Market Research Society on 0500 39 69 99 or also offer the Information Commissioners Switchboard number – 01625 545 700.

INTERVIEWER CHECK RESPONDENT OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD DOESN'T WORK IN ADVERTISING, MARKETING OR MARKET RESEARCH

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES CODES REQUIRED SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS PROJECT: TO BE RECOGNISED AND REPORTED BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND UNDER THE GENERAL CATEGORY OF 'DOES NOT FIT CRITERIA':

Q1 I am going to read out a list of issues that could be considered of social importance. Please tell me how concerned you are about each issue by rating it on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all concerned and 5 is very concerned.

READ OUT ONE AT A TIME – ROTATE

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
1. Preventing Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2. Improving standards in education	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3. Protecting people's personal information	<input type="checkbox"/>					
4. Protecting freedom of speech	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5. Equal rights for everyone	<input type="checkbox"/>					
6. Unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/>					
7. Environmental issues	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8. Access to information held by public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
9. The National Health Service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
10. National Security	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q2 I am going to read out a list of possible consequences that could result from organisations not handling your information responsibly and I would like you to tell me how much each one concerns you. Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means not at all concerned and 5 means extremely concerned.

ROTATE – READ OUT ONE AT A TIME

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Threat to your personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Threat to your health	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Financial loss	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Indignity	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Loss of liberty	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Annoyance or inconvenience	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. Invasion of privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. Personal distress	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q3 I am now going to read out a list of statements and this time I would like you to tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by rating it in a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

READ OUT – ROTATE

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Organisations handle the information they collect about their customers in a fair and proper way	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Individuals have lost control over the way their information is collected and processed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Information held by the government and other public authorities about their operations is available	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Existing laws and organisational practices provide sufficient protection of individuals' personal information	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q4 Everybody has personal information including your name, your address, your bank account number or even your medical details.

What rights do you think you have to access personal information held about you by certain organisations?

DO NOT READ OUT

TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- a. We do not have any rights
- b. Not sure what rights we have
- c. You have a right to see information held about you by organisations
- d. You have a right to see information held by public authorities/public bodies about their operations and activities
- e. You have the right to correct information about you that is wrong
- f. Other—write in _____
- g. Don't know

Q5 Which of the following rights do you think you have with regards to your personal information held by organisations? Please choose as many as you think apply.

READ OUT ONE AT A TIME – ROTATE

- a. You do not have any rights
- b. Not sure what rights you have
- c. You have a right to see information held about you by organisations
- d. You have a right to see information held by public authorities/public bodies about their operations and activities
- e. You have a right to be paid by organisations who pass on information about you
- f. You have a right to correct information about you that is wrong
- g. You have a right to delete information held about you that you are unhappy with
- h. You have rights regarding information held about you by organisations
- i. Other–write in _____
- j. Don't know

Q6 Some types of personal information are considered 'sensitive' and given extra protection in law. I am going to read out a list of different types of information and I would like you to tell me, on a scale of 1 to 10, how sensitive you consider each one to be. 1 is not at all sensitive and 10 is extremely sensitive. **(Interviewer to write the score in the relevant box)**

ROTATE

- Personal contact details (e.g. home address, phone number)
- Financial data (e.g. income and savings)
- Data concerning race or ethnic origin
- Criminal records
- Biometric information (e.g. iris scans, facial scans and finger prints)
- Political opinions
- Membership of political party / organisation
- Clickstream data (e.g. record of web pages visited)
- Religious or philosophical beliefs
- Genetic information
- Health information
- Sexual life information
- Education qualifications
- Employment history
- Trade-union membership

Q7 What is it that concerns you most with regards to organisations using your personal information?

DO NOT READ OUT – tick all that apply and add if necessary

- a. Sending unwanted mail or faxes
- b. Sending unwanted emails
- c. Sending unwanted text messages
- d. Making unwanted phone calls
- e. Not telling me what information they hold or why
- f. Passing on my details to unknown organisations
- g. Making decisions on incorrect information
- h. Sending my information abroad
- i. Holding information on what I buy
- j. Tracking what I look at on the internet
- k. Have no worries
- i. Other–write in _____

Q8 I am now going to read out a list of concerns that people may have about organisations holding their personal information. Please can you tell me, on a scale of 1 to 5, how concerned you are about each one, where 1 means not at all concerned and 5 means extremely concerned?

READ OUT –ROTATE

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
1. Requesting inappropriate information that is not relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2. Requesting too much personal information	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3. Using information for purposes other than that for which it was intended	<input type="checkbox"/>					
4. Passing or selling information on to other organisations without your permission	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5. Not keeping the information securely so it is at risk of being stolen or getting into the wrong hands	<input type="checkbox"/>					
6. Not collecting the information in a secure way	<input type="checkbox"/>					
7. Passing your information on to other countries without adequate data protection	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8. Holding inaccurate or out of date information	<input type="checkbox"/>					
9. Holding information for longer than is required	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q9 What, if any, laws are you aware of concerning the handling of personal information?

DO NOT READ OUT – tick all that apply and add if necessary

- a. Data Protection Act
- b. Freedom of Information Act
- c. Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- d. Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations
- e. Environmental Information Regulations
- f. Other–write in _____
- g. None

Q10 Have you ever heard of the Data Protection Act?

Yes	No	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Go to Q11	Go to Q12	

Q11 Where have you heard or seen about the Data Protection Act in the last 12 months?

DO NOT READ OUT (Tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Friends / relatives
- b. Through work
- c. Jobcentre
- d. Newspapers / magazines
- e. Leaflet
- f. Direct mail
- g. Radio
- h. TV
- i. Internet
- j. Presentations
- k. Posters
- l. Letter / letterhead
- m. Terms and conditions / financial applications
- n. Through education
- o. Advisory centres – e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, library
- p. Other – write in _____
- q. Don't know

Q12 Have you ever requested to see information held about you by organisations?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		Go to Q13b	

Q13a How frequently do you request to see information held about you by organisations?

READ OUT (tick one only)

- Rarely – as circumstances dictate – **GO TO Q14**
- Occasionally – to check something specific – **GO TO Q14**
- Regularly – as a matter of routine – **GO TO Q14**
- Don't know – **GO TO Q14**

Q13b Would you ever consider using your right to see information held about you by organisations?

Yes

No

Go to Q15a

Q14 Can you tell me of any circumstances when you have or would use your data protection right to request to see personal information held about you by an organisation?

DO NOT READ OUT –tick all that apply and add if necessary

- a. No circumstances
- b. General interest
- c. Change in employment status
- d. Altering marital status
- e. Applying for financial credit
- f. Being refused financial credit
- g. After being involved in court action
- h. When moving house
- i. To check criminal record
- j. To check medical records
- k. Other (write in) _____
- l. Don't know

Q15a Where would you go to get advice on your rights under the Data Protection Act?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Solicitor
- b. Magazine
- c. Internet
- d. Citizens Advice Bureau
- e. Trade Association
- f. Local MP or MSP/Councillor/Assembly member
- g. Newspaper
- h. Public library
- i. Accountant
- j. Police
- k. Bank
- l. Benefits office
- m. Department for Constitutional Affairs
- n. Information Commissioners Office
- o. Campaign for Freedom of Information
- p. Scottish Information Office
- q. Other (write in) _____
- r. Don't know

IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONERS OFFICE ASK 15b.
IF NOT SKIP TO QUESTION 16

Q15b How would you prefer to receive advice and guidance on the Data Protection Act from the Information Commissioner?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Phone
- b. Face to face
- c. Visit office
- d. Website
- e. Via a letter
- f. Via stand alone e-mail request
- g. Via an e-mail request through a web site
- h. Via an e-mail bulletin I register to
- i. Through a leaflet
- j. Get in touch with other organisation/advice agency to ask on my behalf
- q. Other (write in) _____
- r. Don't know

Q16 What rights do you think you have to access information held by the Government and other public authorities?

DO NOT PROMPT – DO NOT READ OUT – tick all that apply and add if necessary

INTERVIEWER: CODE CAREFULLY. PROBE FOR DETAIL AS NECESSARY BUT DO NOT PROMPT

- a. The right to request information held by the Government (and/or other public authorities)
- b. The right to request own personal information
- c. The right to request other people's personal information
- d. The right to request information about the environment
- e. The right to see what public money is being spent on
- f. The right to know what type of information is available from the Government (and/or other public authorities)
- g. The right to find out about issues relating to national security
- h. The right to see official information from the Government (and/or other public authorities) such as minutes and planning documents
- i. Other – write in _____
- j. Don't know

Q17 Which of the following rights do you think you have with regards to accessing information held by the Government and other public authorities?

READ OUT ONE AT A TIME – ROTATE

	Yes	No	Don't know
1. The right to request information held by the Government and other public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The right to request own personal information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The right to request other people's personal information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The right to request information about the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The right to see what public money is being spent on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The right to know what type of information is available from the Government and other public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The right to find out about issues relating to national security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The right to see official information from the Government and other public authorities such as minutes and planning documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q18 What, if any, laws are you aware of regarding access to information held by public authorities about the way they run their organisation?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Freedom of Information Act
- b. Data Protection Act
- c. Open Government Code
- d. Environmental Information Regulations
- e Other (write in) _____
- f. None
- g. Don't know

Q18b Have you heard of the Freedom of Information Act?

	Yes	No	Don't know
	1	2	3
Go to Q19	Go to Q20a		

Q19 Where have you heard or seen about the Freedom of Information Act in the last 12 months?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Friends/ relatives
- b. Through work
- c. Job centre
- d. Newspapers/ magazines
- e. Leaflet
- f. Direct mail
- g. Radio
- h. TV
- i. Internet
- j. Presentations
- k. Work shops
- l. Conferences
- m. Posters
- n. Letter / letterhead
- o. Terms and conditions / financial applications
- p. Through education
- q. Advisory centres e.g. Citizen Advice Bureaus, library
- r. Other (write in) _____
- s. Don't know

Q20a Have you ever requested to see information held by the government (and/ or other public authorities)?

Yes 1

No 2

Go to Q21

Q20b How frequently do you request to see information held by the Government (and \ or other public authorities)?

READ OUT (tick one only)

- Rarely – as circumstances dictate – **Go to Q22**
- Occasionally – to check something specific - **Go to Q22**
- Regularly – as a matter of routine – **Go to Q22**
- Don't know – **Go to Q22**

Q21 Would you ever consider requesting to see held information by the Government (and / or other public authorities)?

Yes

No

Go to Q23

Q22 Why do you or would you access information held by public authorities?

DO NOT READ OUT – tick all that apply and add if necessary

- a. Personal reasons
- b. Medical information
- c. Employment
- d. For marital reasons
- e. Moving house
- f. Educational
- g. Work related
- h. Housing/ planning
- i. Environmental
- j. Leisure and recreational
- k. General interest
- l. Public authority/ organisation's performance
- m. Discover corruption or maladministration
- n. Local knowledge
- o. How money is being spent
- p. In relation to a complaint
- q. Other(write in) _____
- r. Don't know

Q23 The following are believed to be benefits of being able to access information held by public authorities. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rank how much you agree or disagree that the following statements are benefits of being able to access information held by public authorities. (1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree).

READ OUT

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Increases confidence in public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Increases trust in public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Increases knowledge of what public authorities do	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Promotes accountability and transparency in public authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Provides more opportunities to have a say and contribute	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q24a Where would you go to get advice on your rights under the Freedom of Information Act?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Solicitor
- b. Magazine
- c. Internet
- d. Citizens Advice Bureau
- e. Trade Association
- f. Local MP/Councillor
- g. Newspaper
- h. Public library
- i. Accountant
- j. Police
- k. Bank
- l. Benefits office
- m. Department for Constitutional Affairs
- n. Information Commissioners Office
- o. Campaign for Freedom of Information
- p. Scottish Information Office
- q. Other (write in) _____
- r. Don't know

IF RESPONDNET MENTIONS THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONERS OFFICE ASK 24b.

IF NOT SKIP TO QUESTION 25

Q24b How would you prefer to receive advice and guidance on the Freedom of Information Act from the Information Commissioner?

DO NOT READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Phone
- b. Face to face
- c. Visit office
- d. Website
- e. Via a letter
- f. Via stand alone e-mail request
- g. Via an e-mail request through a web site
- h. Via an e-mail bulletin I register to
- i. Through a leaflet
- j. Get in touch with other organisation/advice agency to ask on my behalf
- q. Other (write in) _____
- r. Don't know

CORPORATE REPUTATION QUESTIONS

Finally, we would like to ask you some questions about the Information Commissioners Office.

Q25 Have you heard of the Information Commissioner?

Yes	No	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Go to Q28		

Q26 Where, if at all, have you seen or heard anything about the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) over the last 12 months?

READ OUT (tick all that apply and add if necessary)

- a. Newspapers/Magazines
- b. Direct Mail
- c. Leaflet
- d. Radio
- e. TV programmes
- f. Presentations
- g. Workshops
- h. Conferences
- i. Internet
- j. Somewhere else (write in) _____
- k. Don't know

Q27 In your view, what is the role of the Information Commissioner?

DO NOT READ OUT

TICK ALL THAT APPLY and add if necessary

- a. To enforce the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts
- b. To promote public access to official information.
- c. To protect individual's personal information.
- d. To take legal action when the law is broken
- e. To safeguard information rights by providing individuals and organisations information and guidance.
- f. To enhance awareness and understanding of the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.
- g. To register organisations under the Data Protection Act.
- h. To advise on publication schemes
- i. Other(write in) _____
- j. Don't know

ASK EVERYONE

Q28 Are you?

Male 1

Female 2

Q29 I'd just like to ask you a few more questions for classification purposes. Can I just ask which of the following age bands you fall into?

18 -24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65+

Refused

Q30 Which of the following best describes you...?

Single

Married

Living with partner

Widowed/separated/divorced

Other

Refuse

Q31 Do you have any children under 18 living at home?

Yes

1

No

2

Refused

3

Don't know

4

Go to Q33

Q32 What are the ages of the children? **(Tick all that apply)**

0 -3

4 - 6

7 - 10

11 - 13

14 - 15

16 - 17

Refused

Don't know

Q33 Are you working?

Yes

No

Refused

Don't know

Go to Q35

Q34 Is that full time or part time?

Part time

Full time

Refused

Don't know

Go to Q36

Q35 Which of the following best describes your status? **READ OUT**

Retired

At home raising family / housewife / house husband

Registered unemployed

Student in full time education

Other

Refused

Don't know

Q36 Are you the main income earner in your household?

Yes

No

Refused

Don't know

Q37 Social grade (**Interviewer to ascertain occupation for SEG**)

AB

C1

C2

DE

Refused

Don't know

Q38 Finally, just to let you know that you may be contacted for quality control purposes, or also in the event of us wanting to speak to you very briefly again to check something for this survey. Would we be able to contact you?

Yes

No

Thank you for your time and help. I'd like to confirm that my name is and that I am calling from SMSR Ltd.
As explained, this interview has been conducted under the MRS Code of Conduct.

The person at SMSR responsible for this project is Darren Hornby and he/she can be contacted on 01482 211200. There is a freephone number which you can call if you have any questions 0800 138 0584. There is also information available on the ICO website www.ico.gov.uk.