

### **News release**

## 19 April 2011

# 80 students' details found in campus skip

Norwich City College breached the Data Protection Act by dumping sensitive personal information relating to around 80 students in a campus skip, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) said today.

The college reported the incident to the ICO in February 2011. The students' files, some of which included sensitive medical details, were found in unsecured bin bags ready for disposal. This was the second time the college disposed of personal information in this manner.

The ICO's investigation found that although Norwich City College had adequate policies and procedures in place about the handling of personal information, they did not extend to the collection, storage and disposal of confidential waste.

Acting Head of Enforcement, Sally-Anne Poole said:

"From the moment personal information is collected to the time it is securely destroyed, organisations have a legal responsibility to abide by the principles of the Data Protection Act. There is also a reputational risk for organisations with lax data protection practices.

"I am pleased that Norwich City College has agreed to take action to ensure personal information is now securely disposed of. This includes making sure that any future confidential waste is stored in coloured or labelled bin bags so that it can be identified and disposed of correctly."

Richard Palmer, Principal, of Norwich City College of Further and Higher Education, has signed an undertaking to ensure that a formal policy around the handling of confidential waste will be in place. Mr Palmer has agreed that this policy will be communicated to staff and diligently followed from this time onwards.

A full copy of the undertaking can be viewed here:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/what\_we\_cover/promoting\_data\_privacy/taking\_a
ction.aspx#undertakings

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 0303 123 9070 or visit the website at: <a href="www.ico.gov.uk">www.ico.gov.uk</a>.

#### **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. The ICO has 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.
- 3. The ICO is on <u>Twitter</u>, <u>Facebook</u> and <u>LinkedIn</u>, and produces a monthly <u>e-newsletter</u>. Our <u>For the media</u> page provides more information for journalists.
- 4. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles of the Data Protection Act, 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