

## **Information Commissioner Job Pack**

The Government's National Data Strategy sets out our ambition for the UK's pro-growth and trusted data regime, one that helps innovators and entrepreneurs to use data responsibly and securely, without undue regulatory uncertainty or risk, in order to drive growth across the economy. Data is a strategic asset and its responsible use should be seen as a huge opportunity to embrace. Getting this right is critical to jobs and growth as the UK economy becomes increasingly digitised and data-enabled. We also want the public to be active agents in the thriving digital economy, who have confidence and trust in how data, including personal data, is used. This will mean maintaining high standards of data protection without creating unnecessary barriers to data use.

We are looking for an outstanding individual to become the next Information Commissioner, who understands the importance of striking this balance and delivering on this agenda. The Information Commissioner has a key role to play to drive the responsible use of data across the economy, to build trust and confidence, and communicate the wider benefits of data sharing for our society and competition, innovation and growth.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is now one of the most important economic regulators in the UK, responsible for supervising almost every organisation in the country. We want to invest in its future success and sustain its world-leading reputation. The Information Commissioner should play an active role to keep the ICO at the forefront of regulatory best practice, continuing to develop governance, key decision-making and other processes to reflect the ICO's evolving role.

To deliver its duties, the ICO:

- gives advice to members of the public about their information rights;
- gives guidance to organisations about their information rights obligations;
- maintains a public register of data controllers;
- helps and advises business on how to comply with data protection laws while minimising regulatory burdens;
- gathers and deals with concerns raised by members of the public;
- supports the responsible use of data;
- takes action to improve the information rights practices of organisations; and
- co-operates with international partners, including other data protection authorities.

### **The Role: Information Commissioner**

As per the Data Protection Act 2018, the Information Commissioner is to be appointed by Her Majesty by Letters Patent on the basis of fair and open competition. Candidates should be aware that the preferred candidate will be required to appear before a Parliamentary Select Committee prior to appointment.

### **Job description**

The Information Commissioner is responsible for:

- Fulfilling the statutory responsibilities of the Information Commissioner;
- Providing leadership and strategic direction to the Information Commissioner's Office;
- Supporting innovation and growth when discharging their duties;
- Building and maintaining excellent relationships with key stakeholders including the business community, Ministers, Parliament, public interest groups, and international counterparts;
- Contributing to debates both nationally and internationally, on data protection and right issues; and
- Acting as Accounting Officer for the Information Commissioner's Office

### **Key selection criteria**

This is a demanding and high-profile role. We are looking for an exceptional candidate with a demonstrable desire to deliver a new approach to data in the UK that strikes the right balance between high data protection standards and responsible use of data to benefit our economy and society. This candidate must be willing and able to steer the ICO through a dynamic period of change, refining processes and decision-making.

Prospective candidates need to be able to demonstrate that they meet a majority of the following criteria to a high degree:

### **Experience and personal qualities**

- A successful track record of credible and strategic leadership and management, including the delivery of transformational organisational change.
- Experience of working at the highest level of public or commercial life in the UK or internationally.
- Experience of using data to drive innovation and growth, in industry, research or scientific field.
- Experience in data protection and rights.
- Commercial and business acumen, including an understanding of how the data protection regulatory environment impacts on business and how to help them.
- Ability to make sound, independent judgements under pressure and where necessary defend these against internal and external challenge.
- Excellent communication and relationship management skills, and the ability to represent the Information Commissioner's Office to a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- A proven ability to think through complex issues strategically, independently and imaginatively, with a focus on innovation and growth.
- A strong understanding of the legal and regulatory framework in which the Information Commissioner's Office operates.
- Strong financial and performance management skills, including the ability to deliver value for money and achieve operational excellence.
- Ability to have influence and impact for the UK internationally.

## About the ICO

In 2019/20 the ICO received 39,000 data protection enquiries; handled over 102,000 enquiries about nuisance calls and texts; and responded to 6,421 freedom of information requests. The ICO employs approximately 770 staff with its Head Office in Wilmslow and offices in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and London. The ICO receives Grant-Aid of £4.62M (2019/20) for its work on Freedom of Information, Network and Information Systems Regulations, Electronic Identification and Trust Services, Investigatory Powers Act and fee income of (approximately) £46.6M (2019/20) for data protection work. The ICO's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan can be found [here](#), and its annual reports can be found [here](#).

The Information Commissioner's Office is a Non Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport. Although the Information Commissioner operates independently in the exercise of his/her statutory functions, some issues require the approval of the Secretary of State such as funding and the level of fees charged to data controllers. The [Framework Agreement](#) (due for review in 2021) sets out the respective responsibilities of the sponsor department and the Information Commissioner to support the work of both organisations, and to ensure the Commissioner's independence, propriety and value for money.

As a corporation sole<sup>1</sup> the Information Commissioner is responsible for:

- acting as the Accounting Officer for the ICO; answering directly to the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons;
- producing an annual statement of accounts in line with Managing Public Money and the Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual, which is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- setting the pay and conditions of staff in compliance with Managing Public Money and Civil Service pay guidance.

Further detail on the specific legislation and the ICO's powers and functions can be found [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A corporation sole is a legal entity consisting of a single ('sole') incorporated office, occupied by a single (sole) man or woman. This allows a corporation to pass vertically in time from one office holder to the next successor-in-office, giving the position legal continuity with each subsequent office holder having identical powers to his/her predecessor'