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Request

You asked us:

"I would be grateful if you could provide me with the following information regarding the ICO's Audit functions of organisations under data protection legislation.

1. Copies of information relating to the areas of data protection compliance and practice that are routinely audited by the ICO. I appreciate that the scope of an audit might vary according to any specific concerns held by the ICO and the specific nature of the data controller. In light of this, please supply information relating to the most common areas examined in what might be considered a 'typical' or 'generic' audit.
2. The methods used by the ICO in carrying out an audit and any related materials. For example, ICO visits, questionnaires, interviews with relevant staff within the organisation etc.
3. Please supply copies of any standard or generic questions used by the ICO when carrying out audits as above.
4. Please supply information about how organisations are scored or assessed. For example, does the ICO use numerical scoring (rating on a scale of one to five or the like) or is there a scoring system based on non-numerical criteria such as 'Excellent, good, acceptable, poor, concerning', by way of example."

We received your request on 20 March

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA).

Our response

The information that you are seeking is, for the most part, available on our website here:

Audits | ICO

We would also draw your attention to the audits guidance which is linked from the above page and available at the link below:

Guide to data protection audits

This includes the information that you have asked for under questions 1, 2 & 4. In relation to question 1 you may also be interested in the below web page, which contains copies of executive summaries of our recent audits, and can give you more of an idea of the areas of data protection compliance our audits cover most frequently.

Audits and overview reports | ICO

Our data protection audit framework may also be of interest:

Data protection audit framework | ICO

This information is available to you online and is therefore technically exempt under s.21 FOIA.

With regards to question 3, we do not hold this information. Auditors tailor their questions after a review of audit evidence and based on the controls they are looking at within an organisation, and so there is no standard list of questions.

This concludes our response.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response. Please let us know in writing if you want us to carry out a review. Please do so within 40 working days.

You can read a copy of our full review procedure on our website.

If we perform a review but you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the ICO as regulator of the FOIA. This complaint will be handled just like a complaint made to the ICO about any other public authority.

You can raise a complaint through our website.

Your information

Our privacy notice explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us, and sets out your rights. Our Retention and Disposal Policy details how long we keep information.

Yours sincerely

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