



# Privacy & Data Protection

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## Headlines:

- Israel formally added to 'adequate' list, p.17
- Council to tighten policy after loss of memory stick, p.18
- ICO encourages public to secure data online, p.19

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## Two further fines dealt by the ICO

The UK Information Commissioner's Office has issued monetary penalties to two Councils for serious breaches of the Data Protection Act.

Ealing Council has been fined £80,000, and Hounslow Council has received a £70,000 penalty, for the loss of two unencrypted laptops containing sensitive personal data of around 1,700 individuals.

The laptops were stolen from a member of staff of Ealing Council, which runs an out of hours service on behalf of both councils. The service is operated by nine staff who

work from home. The team relies on laptops to record information about individuals, and the two laptops were stolen from an employee's home.

Almost 1,000 of the individuals were clients of Ealing Council and almost 700 were clients of Hounslow Council. The laptops were password protected but unencrypted, a breach of both Councils' policies.

Although there was no evidence to suggest that the data held on the computers were accessed, and there had been no complaints from clients to date, there was

nevertheless a significant risk to the clients' privacy.

The ICO decided that Ealing Council breached the Data Protection Act by issuing an unencrypted laptop to a member of staff in breach of its own policies. Hounslow Council breached the Act by failing to have a written contract in place with Ealing Council. It also did not monitor Ealing Council's procedures for operating the service securely.

Terry Welsh, Borough Solicitor at the London Borough of Hounslow told *Privacy & Data*

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## Council guilty of unlawful outsourcing

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has signed an Undertaking for the UK Information Commissioner's Office after sending benefit data to the wrong recipients.

The Council reported the incident to the ICO in November 2010 after a contractor had erroneously sent letters to the wrong individuals, which included financial data about benefit entitlement, income and savings.

Following its investigation, the ICO

found that the Council had no written contract with the service provider outlining the handling of personal data corresponding with the Council's policies and procedures. The authority has contacted the individuals who were involved in the mix up.

Anne Jones, Assistant Commissioner for Wales at the ICO said: "An individual's financial information, including details of their savings and benefits claims, is some of their most

personal information. Therefore, this data loss would have been worrying and potentially embarrassing for those involved.

"People should be able to trust that organisations will keep their information secure. We are pleased that the council has taken action to rectify the problems uncovered during this incident and that they will also be following the steps the ICO has instructed them to take in

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