

Information management and data protection Policy

When working the Waterways Ombudsman needs to handle various information, mainly about complainants and their complaints. Some of that is personal information covered by the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Ombudsman is registered with the Information Commissioner as a Data Controller and complies with the DPA and the GDPR. Records are kept both on computer and/or in hard copy. For the purposes of the GDPR the Ombudsman is a data controller and a data processor.

Information is kept securely: paper records are held in a locked cabinet when not in use and computer records are password protected and where appropriate encrypted.

The name of the complainant (and some key details relevant to the complaint) will need to be disclosed to the Member in the course of considering a complaint and making a decision. However, any other personal information gathered in the course of a complaint investigation will not be divulged to third parties, for the purposes of investigating the complaint, without the consent of the individual involved. The Ombudsman is required under the Rules of the Waterways Ombudsman Scheme to publish a summary of complaints considered but will omit personal details such as names and addresses of individuals.

Where contract staff are engaged to assist the Ombudsman they are required to observe the same rules regarding security and confidentiality.

Further information about compliance with the GDPR, including the data retention policy, is on the website. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can ask the Ombudsman to provide a hard copy.