

# The Government's Transparency Agenda and the ICO

APPSI meeting – 16 September 2010  
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Deputy Commissioner

# Context

- Information as a key asset
- Growing expectations of transparency
- Consumer, societal and political demands
- Subjective individual views on privacy
- Concerns about security breaches

# Transparency Agenda

- A new right to data?
- Release of datasets in re-usable formats
- Release of senior civil servants' salaries
- Central and local government expenditure
- Extending FOI beyond the public sector

# Access under FOI (or EIR)

- Proactive disclosure – publication schemes
- Disclosure on request – presumption of disclosure
- Procedural stages – review, complaint, appeal
- 5 years on – it works and is a success

# Relationship FOI/Re-use of PSI

- Parallel, not integrated regimes
- Restrictions on re-use resisted
- Form and format provisions upheld
- Most requests are for personal, media, political or commercial (competitive) use

# Reform of FOI?

- Reducing the burden of FOI requests
- Addressing “unintended consequences”
- Communications with the Royal Family
- Government policy and Cabinet minutes
- International obligations – EIR, “Inspire” and Data Protection

# ICO priorities

- More emphasis on proactive disclosure
- Importance of timeliness and positive engagement
- Tougher approach to enforcement
- Proper protection of personal information
- Issues around anonymisation and identification

# ICO Performance and Delivery – 2009/10

- FOI complaints received: 3734 – 20% up
- FOI complaints closed: 4196 – 39% up
- Significant reduction in age of caseload
- 628 formal decision notices
- 161 appeals to Tribunal

# Looking Ahead

- FOI has changed the landscape
- Greater transparency not dependent on FOI
- “Transparency Agenda” needs clearer articulation
- Existing delivery mechanisms may be sufficient (with minor tweaks?)
- Political will and culture most important factors

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