

Frequently asked questions

What is the right of access?

You have the right to ask an organisation whether or not they are using or storing your personal information. You can also ask for copies of your personal information, verbally or in writing.

This is called the right of access and is commonly known as making a subject access request or SAR.

FCHO is committed to ensuring that the personal information we hold about you will only be used when the law allows us to. Most commonly, we will use your personal information according to the lawful bases set out in the UK GDPR.

How to make a subject access request?

The easiest way to make a subject access request is using the ICO's online service. It takes about 10 minutes. It helps you write your request then sends it to the organisation by email.

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/make-a-subject-access-request/>

Can I make a subject access request verbally?

Yes. You can make a subject access request verbally, but we recommend you put it in writing if possible because this gives you a record of your request.

If you are making a verbal request, try to:

- use straightforward, polite language;
- focus the conversation on your subject access request;
- discuss the reason for your request, if this is appropriate – work with us to identify the type of information you need and where it can be found;
- ask us to make written notes – especially if you are asking for very specific information; and
- check our understanding – ask us to briefly summarise your request and inform us if anything is incorrect or missing before finishing the conversation.

However, even if you make your request verbally, we recommend you follow it up in writing (e.g. by letter, email or using a standard form).

Can someone else make a request on my behalf?

Yes, you can authorise someone else to make a subject access request for you. However, you should consider whether you want the other person to have access to some or all of your personal information.

Depending on the nature of your request, the other person could gain access to information that you may not want to share with them, such as your medical history.

Examples of individuals making requests for other people include:

- someone with parental responsibility, or guardianship, asking for information about a child or young person;
- a person appointed by a court to manage someone else's affairs;
- a solicitor acting on their client's instructions; or
- a relative or friend that the individual feels comfortable asking for help.

Upon receiving the request, we need to be satisfied that the other individual is allowed to represent you.

We may ask for formal supporting evidence to show this, such as:

- written authorisation from you; or
- a more general power of attorney.

It is the other person's responsibility to provide this when asked to do so.

Should I keep a record of my request?

Yes – whenever possible, we strongly recommend that:

- you keep a copy of any documents or written correspondence for your own records;
- you keep any proof of postage or delivery (such as a postal reference number).

Where relevant documents are not available for you to copy, consider making a written log of your request. This should include key details, such as:

- the date and time of your request;
- the location (e.g. if your request was made in person);
- the contact number or submission form you used;
- the details of any contacts you have interacted with;
- notes about any personal information you asked for;
- any further information that we may have asked you to provide;
- any reference numbers we give to you; and
- any other relevant information.

This will provide helpful evidence if you wish to:

- follow up your request;
- raise complaints; or
- complain about our response, at a later stage.