

## Transparency with privacy –putting into practice

The government has put the twin objectives of greater transparency by public bodies and greater privacy protection for citizens at the heart of its work programme. We support greater transparency by public bodies but where this involves personal information we need to ensure there is respect for data protection rights too.

The government's wish to publish online nationwide crime mapping information is a recent example of how Strategic Liaison and Policy Delivery have been working together to try to ensure that this development is in line with our own information rights policy objectives.

Strategic Liaison has been participating in a national level panel chaired by the Home Office implementing this initiative. Its a flagship policy that enjoys ministerial support so there is a real rush to have this operating in January 2011. Whilst we support the move to greater openness, an allied concern is that to map crimes to individual houses can affect the privacy interests of those who live there. Not everyone wants to see the crime they suffered pinpointed to their address, searchable by anyone in the world. Besides being intrusive, it can place them at risk of repeat victimisation

Strategic Liaison identified significant privacy concerns and managed to ensure that these were not overlooked in the rush to implement the system but difficult questions were what level of crime mapping is acceptable and how do you strike the right balance between maximum transparency and appropriate privacy for victims? What was needed was authoritative advice from the ICO on the factors to take into account when deciding what the right level of granularity.

This is where Policy Delivery then came to the fore. In a matter of days they had produced from scratch detailed authoritative advice on crime mapping setting out the factors that need to be taken into account when deciding the appropriate level to show crime mapping data. This took account of our previous relevant decision notices, the different types of crime mapping techniques that are available as well as the requirements of the DPA.

This advice helped Strategic Liaison successfully argue for changes to the planned initiative and has now been influential at senior level across government where the need to strike the correct balance between their two objectives has been brought home. The Cabinet Office Minister subsequently Policy Delivery has been one of the first to meet with the person leading the review.

## SHORTER Text

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takes account of data protection concerns when personal information is involved.

One flagship ministerial initiative is the publication online of nationwide crime mapping information showing the location of all crimes. Strategic Liaison have been involved in influencing this initiative to make sure that data protection safeguards for victims are not overlooked. To help Policy Delivery urgently produced detailed and clear advice based on relevant past FoI decision notices, crime mapping techniques and the requirements of the DPA. (Insert link)

This advice not only helped Strategic Liaison successfully make the case for improved privacy safeguards but has now sparked cross government consideration of this important issue with the Cabinet Office Minister announcing a review of the impact of transparency on privacy to inform the Government's approach to the release of data as part of its transparency agenda. This is a good example of how Strategic Liaison and Policy Delivery work together with the aim that the ICO's information rights policy objectives are achieved in practice.

## Crime mapping

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One flagship ministerial initiative, CrimeMapper, due to launch on 1 February 2011 is the publication online of nationwide crime mapping information showing the location of all crimes. Strategic Liaison have been involved in influencing this initiative to make sure that data protection safeguards for victims are not overlooked. To support this work Policy Delivery urgently produced detailed and clear advice based on relevant past FoI decision notices, crime mapping techniques and the requirements of the DPA. **[Click here to read the ICO's guidance.](#)**

This advice not only helped Strategic Liaison successfully make the case for improved privacy safeguards but has now sparked cross government consideration of this important issue with the Cabinet Office Minister announcing a review of the impact of transparency on privacy to inform the Government's approach to the release of data as part of its transparency agenda. We have already provided detailed comments on the crime mapping elements of that review. This is a good example of how Strategic Liaison and Policy Delivery work together with the aim that the ICO's information rights policy objectives are achieved in practice

**31 January**

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