

National Fraud Initiative

The Utility Regulator is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds in order to prevent and detect fraud. It is required to participate in a data matching exercise and so must provide particular sets of data for matching.

The data matching exercise will be carried out by the Comptroller and Auditor General under Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. As it will be carried out with statutory authority, individual consent relating to the use and release of data is not required under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data matching involves comparing computer records (usually personal information) held by one body against those held by the same or another body to see how far they match, identifying fraudulent claims and payments. Where a match is found it indicates that there may be an inconsistency requiring further investigation to ascertain whether it is as a result of fraud, error or there is another explanation.

For further information on the Comptroller and Auditor General's legal powers, the Code of Practice covering data matching and the reasons why particular information is matched, see the NI Audit Office website www.niauditoffice.gov.uk where you may also access the Layered Fair Process Notice 2010. For further information on data matching at the Utility Regulator contact Ian Campbell on 028 9031 1575 or ian.campbell@uregni.gov.uk.