

National Fraud Initiative Privacy Notice

1. Introduction

The Utility Regulator is committed to protecting public funds and ensuring that public money is used appropriately and effectively.

To support this responsibility, the Utility Regulator participates in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), a data matching exercise conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) through the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

This Privacy Notice is intended to inform individuals whose personal data may be shared by the Utility Regulator for National Fraud Initiative purposes, as far as practicable, before or at the time their data is submitted for data matching.

The National Fraud Initiative assists in the prevention and detection of fraud, error and other irregularities by comparing data held by public bodies with data held by other organisations. Data matching identifies potential matches that may require further investigation. A match does not automatically indicate fraud or wrongdoing, and all matches are subject to review before any action is taken.

2. Purpose of processing

The Utility Regulator may disclose and share personal data with the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland for the purposes of participating in the National Fraud Initiative.

Your personal data may therefore be processed and matched with information held by other public bodies and participating organisations for the purpose of:

- preventing and detecting fraud;
- identifying potential fraud, overpayments, duplicate payments and other irregularities;
- protecting public funds;
- improving the accuracy of records; and
- supporting investigations where potential discrepancies are identified.

This processing is undertaken in the public interest and forms part of the Utility Regulator's wider responsibilities for safeguarding public resources.

3. Legal basis for processing

The Utility Regulator shares information for National Fraud Initiative purposes under the statutory powers contained within Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

The lawful basis under UK GDPR for processing personal data for the National Fraud Initiative is:

Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR – processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Utility Regulator.

This is supported by **Section 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018**, which recognises processing necessary for the exercise of a function of a public nature or a function exercised in the public interest.

The processing does not rely upon consent.

4. Who we share information with

For National Fraud Initiative purposes, the Utility Regulator may share information with:

- The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG);
- The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO);
- The UK Cabinet Office, which undertakes data matching on behalf of the C&AG;
- Audit bodies and organisations authorised under the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003; and
- Other public bodies and organisations where disclosure is permitted by law and necessary for the prevention and detection of fraud.

Information will only be shared where there is a lawful basis for doing so and appropriate security safeguards are in place.

5. Categories of data used

The National Fraud Initiative uses specified datasets that may include information relating to:

Payroll data

This may include:

- employee number;
- name and title;
- address;
- date of birth;
- contact details;
- National Insurance number;

- employment status;
- salary and pay information;
- bank account details; and
- employment start and end dates.

Accounts payable and creditor data

This may include:

- creditor name;
- address;
- contact details;
- bank account details;
- invoice details;
- payment information; and
- VAT information.

The categories of information processed may change between NFI exercises. The most up-to-date specification is published by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Cabinet Office.

6. How long information is retained

Personal data processed through the National Fraud Initiative will not be retained for longer than necessary.

Retention arrangements for National Fraud Initiative data are determined by the Northern Ireland Audit Office and Cabinet Office in accordance with the published National Fraud Initiative data retention and [deletion schedules](#).

The Utility Regulator may retain information relating to investigations, audit activity, legal proceedings or regulatory requirements where this is necessary and lawful to do so.

7. Your rights

Individuals have rights under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, including the right to:

- be informed about how their personal data is used;
- request access to personal data held about them;
- request rectification of inaccurate information;
- request restriction of processing in certain circumstances; and

- lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Some rights may be limited where exemptions apply in connection with fraud prevention, regulatory functions or legal obligations.

8. Further information about the National Fraud Initiative

Further information about the National Fraud Initiative, including reports, data specifications, legal powers and the Code of Data Matching Practice, can be found on the Northern Ireland Audit Office website:

[National Fraud Initiative - Northern Ireland Audit Office](#)

Further information is also available from:

[National Fraud Initiative - UK Government](#)

[The National Fraud Initiative Code of Data Matching Practice](#) should be read alongside this Privacy Notice.

9. Contact us

If you have any questions about this Privacy Notice, how your personal data is processed as part of the National Fraud Initiative, or if you wish to exercise your data protection rights, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Utility Regulator
Millennium House
Great Victoria Street
Belfast
BT2 7AQ
Email: uregnidpo@uregni.gov.uk

The Utility Regulator's general privacy information is available within the Utility Regulator Privacy Notice.

10. Complaints

The Utility Regulator aims to process personal data lawfully, fairly and transparently.

If you have concerns or are dissatisfied about how your personal data has been processed in connection with the National Fraud Initiative, you should first contact the Utility Regulator's Data Protection Officer using the contact details above.

The Utility Regulator aims to process personal data lawfully, fairly and transparently.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK's independent regulator for data protection matters.

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: [Information Commissioner's Office](#)

Online complaint form: [Make a complaint to the ICO](#)