



The ME Association, Data Protection and Privacy Policy

The ME Association is extremely conscious of the importance of keeping all data it holds confidential. All persons who handle any data on its behalf have clear guidelines as to how that data must be handled. The eight principles set out below and contained in The Data Protection Act 1998 are our touchstone.

Data Protection Principles

The Eight Data Protection Principles are based on three key concepts:

- Purpose – personal data must only be held for a clear purpose or purposes;
- Fairness – personal data must only be processed for legitimate purposes;
- Transparency – data subjects must be given certain basic information about the personal data held about them.

First Principle – fair and lawful processing

“Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met.”

This Principle aims to ensure that individuals are made aware of how their personal data will be used and covers both the original obtaining of data, for both computer and manual files, and its subsequent processing.

Second Principle – purposes for holding data

“Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.”

This Principle covers the identification of the purposes for which data is processed and the restriction of processing to those purposes.

Third Principle – status of data

“Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose(s) for which it is processed.”

This Principle requires that all data held must be justified in relation to the stated purpose for which it is held. In collecting data therefore, it is important to ask whether the data is really needed for the purposes concerned. If the answer is no, the data must not be collected. It is equally important to review the amount of data being collected from time to time to ensure that it is still relevant.

Fourth Principle – accuracy of data

“Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date.”

This Principle requires that the data held is always accurate and, except in the case of historic data kept for archive purposes, up-to-date.

In holding data therefore procedures must be put in place (i) to ensure that data is accurate and (ii) to enable data to be updated.

Fifth Principle – retention and disposal of data

“Personal data processed for any purpose(s) shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.”

This Principle covers the retention of data for the purpose concerned and its subsequent disposal. No data must be kept for longer than is necessary to carry out the purpose concerned. The length of time will vary greatly with the type of data being held; in some cases it might be appropriate to retain it for only a very short time, in other cases it might be necessary to retain it indefinitely; some retention periods are even governed by statute.

Once a retention policy is in place, appropriate procedures to dispose of the data must also be put in place. Security is very important in the disposal of personal data.

If data is to be retained for archive purposes, the Third Principle must be taken into account.

Sixth Principle – rights of data subjects

Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act.

This Principle covers a number of rights which data subjects have with respect to their own data. These are (i) rights of subject access, (ii) rights to prevent processing, including direct marketing, (iii) rights of compensation for substantial damage or distress, (iv) rights to have data amended or deleted, and (v) rights relating to automated decision-taking.

Subject access: Data subjects have the right to have access to their personal data. This is probably the most important of the data subject rights. It is also the right of which most data subjects are aware.

Prevention of processing including direct marketing: The Act includes an important right to prevent processing, in particular direct marketing. This relates to any information sent out to a data subject that is not directly concerned with University business. For example, flyers sent to alumni about unrelated products for sale by a third party.

Anyone likely to engage in direct marketing must have procedures in place to enable a data subject to object to being the target of direct marketing and to have their name removed from any such lists.

Seventh Principle – disclosure of data

“Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.”

This Principle covers both the disclosure of data and the unauthorised or unlawful processing of data. It is probably the single most important Principle and the easiest to get wrong. Data security is another way of looking at disclosure and is equally important as far as the Seventh Principle is concerned. Various measures must be taken to ensure that data is kept secure:

- Technical measures: network security; the proper use of passwords;
- Organisational measures: the physical security of computers and files in cabinets; locked rooms; ensuring that computer screens cannot be overlooked.

Accidental loss, destruction or damage to data has the same effect as an unauthorised disclosure. Good back-up procedures must be in place and used effectively. These should include procedures to recover lost data.

It is particularly important to be aware of data security when processing data off- site, especially when using a laptop in a public place such as a train.

Eighth Principle – transfer of data

“Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.”

Our Privacy Policy in more detail

1. Introduction

The ME Association is committed to protecting your privacy and security. This policy explains how and why we use your personal data, to ensure you remain informed and in control of your information.

You can decide not to receive communications or change how we contact you at any time. If you wish to do so please contact us by writing to us at 7 Apollo Office Court, Radclive Road, Gawcott, MK 18 4DF or by telephoning 01280 818964 (Lines open 9am – 4pm, Mon – Fri).

We will **never** sell your personal data, and will only ever share it with organisations we work with and where it is necessary.

2. About Us

Your personal data (i.e. any information which identifies you, or which can be identified as relating to you personally) will be collected and used by us in accordance with the purposes outlined in the Section entitled ‘**How we use information**’.

3. What information we collect

Personal data you provide

We collect data you provide to us. This includes information you give when joining or registering, placing an order or communicating with us. For example:

- personal details (name, email, address, telephone etc.) when you join as a member
- financial information (payment information such as credit/debit card or direct debit details, and whether donations are gift-aided).
- information created by your involvement with the ME Association

Your activities and involvement with the ME Association will result in personal data being created. This could include details of how you've helped us by volunteering or being involved with our campaigns and activities.

Sensitive personal data

We do not collect or store sensitive personal data. However, there are some situations where this is necessary (e.g. if you volunteer with us). If this does occur, we'll take extra care to ensure your privacy rights are protected.

4. How we use information

We only ever use your personal data to:

- enter into, or perform, a contract with you;
- comply with a legal duty;
- contact you with information of legitimate interest
- protect your vital interests;
- for our own (or a third party's) lawful interests, provided your rights don't override these.

As an example, we use personal data to communicate with people, to promote the ME Association, and to help with fundraising. This includes keeping you up to date with our news, updates, campaigns and fundraising information.

We also use personal data for administrative purposes (i.e. to carry on our charity and fundraising work). This includes:

- receiving donations (e.g. direct debits or gift-aid instructions);
- maintaining databases of our volunteers, members and supporters;
- performing our obligations under membership contracts;
- fulfilling orders for goods or services (whether placed online, over the phone or in person);
- helping us respect your choices and preferences

5. Disclosing and sharing data

We will **never** sell your personal data.

We may share personal data with subcontractors or suppliers who provide us with services. For example, if you order something from the ME Association Shop, your name and address will be shared with the delivery company or where a mailing company needs your name and address to deliver your quarterly magazine.

Fundraising

As a charity, we rely on donations and support from others to continue our work. From time to time, we will contact members and supporters with fundraising material and communications. This might be about an appeal, a competition we're running, or to suggest ways you can raise funds (e.g. a sponsored event or activity, or even buying a product if the ME Association will receive some of the proceeds).

6. How we protect data

We employ a variety of physical and technical measures to keep your data safe and to prevent unauthorised access to, or use or disclosure of your personal information.

Electronic data and databases are stored on secure computer systems and we control who has access to information (using both physical and electronic means).

How long we store information

We will only use and store information for so long as it is required for the purposes it was collected for. How long information will be stored for depends on the information in question and what it is being used for.

We continually review what information we hold and delete what is no longer required.

7. Keeping you in control

We want to ensure you remain in control of your personal data. Part of this is making sure you understand your legal rights, which are as follows:

- the right to confirmation as to whether or not we have your personal data and, if we do, to obtain a copy of the personal information we hold (this is known as subject access request);
- the right to have your data erased (though this will not apply where it is necessary for us to continue to use the data for a lawful reason);
- the right to have inaccurate data rectified.

Complaints

You can complain to the ME Association directly by contacting us using the details set out above. If you wish to make a complaint which does not directly relate to your data protection and privacy rights, you can do so in accordance with our charity's complaints policy.

If you are not happy with our response, or you believe that your data protection or privacy rights have been infringed, you can complain to the UK Information Commissioner's Office which regulates

and enforces data protection law in the UK. Details of how to do this can be found at www.ico.org.uk

8. Cookies and links to other sites

Cookies

Our website uses local storage (such as cookies) to provide you with the best possible experience and to allow you to make use of certain functionality (such as being able to shop online).

Links to other sites

Our website contains hyperlinks to many other websites. We are not responsible for the content or functionality of any of those external websites (but please let us know if a link is not working).

If an external website requests personal information from you (e.g. in connection with an order for goods or services), the information you provide will not be covered by the ME Association's Privacy Policy. We suggest you read the privacy policy of any website before providing any personal information.

When purchasing goods or services from any of the businesses that our site links to, you will be entering into a contract with them (agreeing to their terms and conditions) and not with the ME Association.

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