

# Personal Data Management Policy – Consumer Credit Reporting Activities



Under UK regulations, "personal data" means any information that relates to a living individual who can be identified from the information, alone or in combination with other accessible information.

Equifax takes great care to ensure that we use and process personal data in ways that comply with applicable regulations and respects individual privacy.

This policy applies to personal data that Equifax uses to create and maintain consumer credit information databases.

## **1. Purpose for which Equifax uses personal data**

- 1.1 Equifax maintains databases recording the history of consumer credit activities, matched to individuals' identity and residency data. We use this data to provide services to our customers. Our services include credit reference reports, identity verification, portfolio management, marketing, anti-money laundering checks and fraud detection.
- 1.2 Equifax services help consumers and businesses complete credit transactions and enter into relationships by providing access to accurate information about consumers' credit histories, identities and residency.
- 1.3 Our customers are generally commercial organisations and government bodies that wish to transact business with or provide a service to a data subject, and include lenders, landlords, insurers and employers.

## **2. Protecting personal data when it is shared**

- 2.1 Personal data is frequently shared to our customers as part of the services we provide. For more information about when and how Equifax shares personal data, please see our Data Sharing Policy.
- 2.2 Equifax screens any organisation that wishes to use our services before accepting them as a customer. The organisation must demonstrate that they have a legitimate business use for our services, and can protect any personal data they receive from us.
- 2.3 If an organisation is accepted as a customer, it must agree under contract to use personal data extracted from our databases in strict compliance with applicable regulations. For example, if an organisation will transfer personal data outside the EEA, they must satisfy Equifax that the personal data will be protected to EU standards.
- 2.4 Before requesting personal data from Equifax, a customer will generally notify the data subject and have their consent to use the data. In some circumstances (for example, to use anti-money laundering services), a customer may only be required to notify the data subject before making the request. A customer must not request personal data without at least notifying the data subject unless a regulatory exception or exemption applies.

## **3. Personal data maintained in Equifax's consumer credit information databases**

- 3.1 Equifax collects personal data from various sources, including customers, collection agencies and public records. We also collect some personal data directly from individuals who contact us to request changes or updates to data in our databases.
- 3.2 The data in Equifax's databases generally falls into one of the following categories:
  - (a) Identifying information - key data that allows Equifax to match an individual with his or her credit file including information such as name, address, and date of birth.
  - (b) Credit agreements - data about current and historical credit obligations, including the type of credit extended, payment status, and amounts outstanding.
  - (c) Search information - a list of organisations that have accessed data in the consumer credit file, or on whose behalf the data was used.
  - (d) Public records - publicly available data such as electoral roll information, bankruptcies, and civil judgments.
  - (e) Consumer statement - a statement that may be provided by the data subject to clarify information in the credit file.

3.3 Equifax only includes personal data in our databases that is relevant and sufficiently complete and up-to-date to support our services. Our databases do not include any of the following personal data, which the Data Protection Act defines as sensitive:

- (a) race or ethnic origin
- (b) political opinions
- (c) religious or similar beliefs
- (d) membership in a trade union
- (e) physical or mental health or condition, unless it is included in a statement the data subject requests Equifax include in the database (please see Paragraph 5.3 below).
- (f) sexual life
- (g) commission or alleged commission of any offence, or any related proceedings

#### **4. Updating personal data**

- 4.1 An organisation that submits personal data to Equifax is required to inform us of any material change to the data within a reasonable time. Since most of our sources are lenders, they send updated records at regular intervals. Open accounts are updated monthly by the credit grantors.
- 4.2 Equifax also removes personal data from our databases after defined periods of time. For example, data about a credit agreement will be removed six years after the agreement ends or is considered in default.

#### **5. Accuracy of personal data**

- 5.1 Because Equifax does not typically have access to original records, we rely on the sources of personal data to verify it and correct any errors. Equifax encourages data subjects to review personal data in our databases and to contact us to report inaccuracies.
- 5.2 Upon receiving a report that personal data is inaccurate, Equifax contacts the source of the data and asks them to verify it. If the source cannot or does not confirm that the data is accurate, Equifax removes it from our database. If the source agrees that the data is inaccurate, the source may update or correct the data directly. If they do not, Equifax will either remove the data or correct it based on information provided by the source. If the source confirms that the data is accurate, Equifax will leave the data in our database and refer the data subject to the source to resolve the dispute. Under applicable regulations, Equifax must complete this verification process within 28 days after receiving the report that data may be inaccurate.
- 5.3 Equifax will include a statement about the disputed data in our database until the verification process described in Paragraph 5.2 is completed, and the statement will be provided to customers who access the data.
- 5.4 If the data subject is not satisfied with the outcome of the verification process, they may place a statement disputing the data in Equifax's database. This statement will be provided to Equifax customers who access the data until the data subject removes the statement or until the disputed data is removed from the database, whichever happens first.

#### **6. Data subjects may access their personal data**

- 6.1 Every individual has a legal right to obtain a credit reference report on himself or herself from Equifax for £2. An individual may obtain the report online at Equifax's website at <http://www.equifax.co.uk> or request it by post at the following address.

Equifax Credit File Advice Centre  
PO Box 1140  
Bradford BD1 5US

Equifax will send the report within 7 days of receiving your request.

- 6.2 Equifax also offers paid services to allow individuals unlimited online access to their credit reference reports throughout the term of the subscription, and will alert them of any key changes in the data. These services are available online at Equifax's website.
- 6.3 An individual may also request access to all personal data Equifax may have about them, including data that is not contained in our consumer credit information databases. This type of request takes longer to process, and must be submitted to Equifax in writing. Equifax may charge a fee of £10 for processing and responding to this type of request in accordance with applicable regulations. Under applicable regulations, Equifax must respond to this type of request within 40 days.

## **7. Responsibility for this policy**

- 7.1 Equifax has assigned responsibility for this policy to our Head of Compliance & Regulatory Affairs, who may be contacted by post at:

Equifax Customer Relations  
PO Box 1140  
Bradford BD1 5US

Attention: Head of Compliance & Regulatory Affairs

## **8. Applicable regulations**

- 8.1 While this is not an exhaustive list, the following regulations (as amended from time to time) are directly applicable to how Equifax manages personal data as a credit reference agency:
  - (a) Data Protection Act 1998
  - (b) Consumer Credit (Credit Reference Agency) Regulations 2000
  - (c) Data Protection (Subject Access) (Fees and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2000
  - (d) Consumer Credit Act 1974
  - (e) The Consumer Credit (EU Directive) Regulations 2010
  - (f) The Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001