

# **Privacy and Data-Sharing**

## **Survey of Public Awareness and Perceptions**

**Research Study Conducted for  
Department for Constitutional Affairs**

**June-July 2003**

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# Introduction

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This report contains the findings from a study, carried out by the MORI Social Research Institute exploring awareness of and attitudes towards the sharing of personal information by public sector organisations. This research was conducted for the Department for Constitutional Affairs (formerly the Lord Chancellor's Department) which was assisted by the Consumers Association, Liberty and the Office of the Information Commissioner in steering the research. This report presents the main findings, while detailed computer breakdowns are provided in a separate volume.

## Background and Objectives

The aim of this research is firstly, to explore the public's awareness and level of information around what personal information is held about them by public service organisations and secondly, to explore public opinion and concerns around how this information is held and used.

The research comprised a set of questions within the MORI Omnibus survey. Please see sample design below for details.

The research objectives were to explore:

- What do the public consider to be personal information?
- What level of awareness is there among the general public around what information is held about them by public service organisations, and whether people *feel* informed?
- What concerns do the public have around public services sharing information, and how do the public react to a series of scenarios of shared information?
- What experience do people have of giving out personal information to public service organisations, and how far do they trust those organisations in their handling of information?
- Do people make complaints about the way their information is handled, and if not, why not? And to whom do people complain?

## **Omnibus Methodology**

An array of thirty questions were placed on the MORI Omnibus, the regular MORI survey among the general public. A nationally representative quota sample of 2,098 adults (aged 15 and over) was interviewed throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland by MORI in 201 different sampling points.

Interviews were conducted face to face, in respondents' homes, using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) between 28<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

At the analysis stage, the Great Britain data were weighted by social grade, standard region, unemployment, cars in household, age, work status and gender to match the known population profile. Data for Northern Ireland were weighted by gender, age and social class. The UK data has been weighted to the correct balance between GB and Northern Ireland.

## **Presentation and Interpretation of Data**

In the graphs and tables, the figures quoted are percentages. The size of the sample base from which the percentage is derived is indicated. Note that the base may vary – the percentage is not always based on the total sample. Caution is advised when comparing responses between small sample sizes.

As a rough guide, please note that the percentage figures for the various sub-samples or groups generally need to differ by a certain number of percentage points for the difference to be statistically significant. This number will depend on the size of the sub-group sample and the % finding itself – full details of this are given in the appendices.

Where an asterisk (\*) appears it indicates a percentage of less than one, but greater than zero. Where percentages do not add up to 100% this can be due to a variety of factors – such as the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'Other' responses, multiple responses or computer rounding.

In this report, reference is made to “net” figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for number variables. In the case of a “net satisfaction” figure, this represents the percentage satisfied on a particular issue or service, less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, if a service records 40% satisfied and 25% dissatisfied, the “net satisfaction” figure is +15 points.

## **Publication of Data**

The copyright of all the work executed under the contract shall be the property of and vest in the Crown which reserves the right to reproduce such work as may be required by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Compliance with the MRS Code of Conduct and our clearing of any copy or data for publication, web-siting or press release which contains any data derived from

MORI research is necessary. This is to protect our client's reputation and integrity as much as our own. We recognise that it is in no one's best interests to have survey findings published which could be misinterpreted, or could appear to be inaccurately, or misleadingly, presented.

# Summary

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## Defining personal information

- People have a **wide definition** of what constitutes ‘personal information’. Health and financial records are prominent, but people also include items such as address details, name and date of birth, and employment and criminal records, as well as many other personal and lifestyle issues.

## Level of awareness

- **Awareness of what personal information is held by public services is low**, with 64% saying they do not feel well informed. Exactly the same proportion say they want to know more (particularly the middle classes), though previous qualitative work<sup>1</sup> suggests this is not a top-of-mind issue for many.
- Similarly, 27% are unable to give a reason why public services share information. Of those that do, the top reasons split between positive (improving efficiency, stopping fraud and crime), and negative (to keep track of people, to sell for marketing purposes, ‘Big Brother’). Only 3% say public services share information to ‘make life easier for me’.
- Lack of information about people’s rights is also uncovered:
  - 74% don’t know how to find out what personal information public services hold about them;
  - 68% don’t know how to make a complaint about the way public services handle their information;
  - 53% don’t know what their rights are regarding their personal information.

## Concern about sharing data

- **Sixty percent of the public say they are very or fairly concerned about public services sharing their personal information**, with 22% *very* concerned. Only 12% say they are not at all concerned. Supporting previous qualitative work carried out by MORI for the Performance & Innovation Unit<sup>1</sup>, the main drivers of this concern appear to be a **lack of control** over this information, and a **lack of knowledge** over what is being done with it.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Perri, *Strategies for Re-assurance: Public Concerns about Privacy and Data-sharing in Government*, MORI research conducted in conjunction with King’s College London for the Performance and Innovation Unit, 2001.

- However, when presented with a number of positive and negative scenarios (for example NHS records being passed to social services for aftercare, or DVLA passing driving details to the police), **around 45-50% say they would be not at all concerned** if this information sharing took place. The exception is a local authority building up a central database (32% not at all concerned), even though the purpose of this is to speed up response times to enquiries. This suggests people may react against the idea of a “central database”.
- It is not unusual in survey work to see this manifestation of “I have nothing to hide”, and “It won’t happen to me” (for example, other research has found support for ID cards<sup>2</sup>), though it is interesting to find that this pattern even applies to financial and medical information. Further research could help us understand the context in which people say they are not concerned – is it because they feel only people who have something to hide should be worried, because they feel it is something over which they have no control, because of the trust that people place in public services such as the NHS, or for other reasons?
- There is a **fairly consistent trend for the middle-classes to be least concerned**. Again, there could be several reasons for this. The middle-classes have very different relationships with public services such as the Benefits Agency and local councils than unskilled manual workers/those living on benefits, and this may affect their confidence and trust in public services. Furthermore, they may feel much more confident that they could rectify any mistakes made by public services handling their information.
- On the other hand, younger people tend to be more concerned – or at least less likely to say that they are *not at all* concerned about each of the various scenarios. This is despite the fact that they are less likely to say they are *very* concerned in response to the general question, and are most likely to say that they don’t know and don’t care what public services do with their personal information. Again, this may be partly down to attitudes towards government more generally. On the one hand, there is a disconnection from government, but when presented with concrete examples of information sharing young people are more likely to express distrust of the government’s motives.

## **Experience of data-sharing**

- Seventy-four percent have given their personal information to a public service in the last 12 months, mostly to a health service provider, a local council, or to the Inland Revenue.
- Of those that have, **a clear majority trust the public service** concerned to not sell the information for marketing purposes, to

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<sup>2</sup> Atkinson, S. & Elgood, J. *Identity Cards Poll, MORI research conducted for News of the World, 2001.*

handle the information responsibly, and to ensure that only authorised people see the information. This is despite the fact that **40% say they were not given any details** about what would be done with their information:

- 34% were told why the information was needed;
  - 25% were told whether the information would remain confidential;
  - 11% were told how the information would be kept.
- People are most likely to trust a health service, Passport Agency or the Police to handle their information. Local councils, the Benefit Agency and Job Centres receive lower ratings.

## **Making a complaint**

- Only three per cent say they have asked a public service to tell them what information is held about them in the last five years. Those that did found the process easy rather than difficult by a ratio of 2:1. Ten percent say they have wanted to approach a public service to ask them about their information in the past but have not done so. **Lack of information is again the main deterrent**, with 40% of these saying the reason they did not ask was because they did not know how to, while 13% say they did not know they could.
- It has already been shown that most people do not know how to make a complaint to public services about the way their personal information was handled. Bearing this in mind, when asked what they would do if they were in that situation, 44% say they would complain to the service directly, 15% say they would go to a Citizens Advice Bureau, and 9% say they would go to their MP/Councillor.
- **Four per cent spontaneously say they would go to the Information Commissioner**, rising slightly among people educated to degree or A-level or equivalent, who would be expected to be more likely to have heard of the Commissioner. Awareness is also slightly higher in London.

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*London, August 2003*

*Gideon Skinner*

*Anne-Merete Tonsager*

*Nicola Hall*

# Defining Personal Information

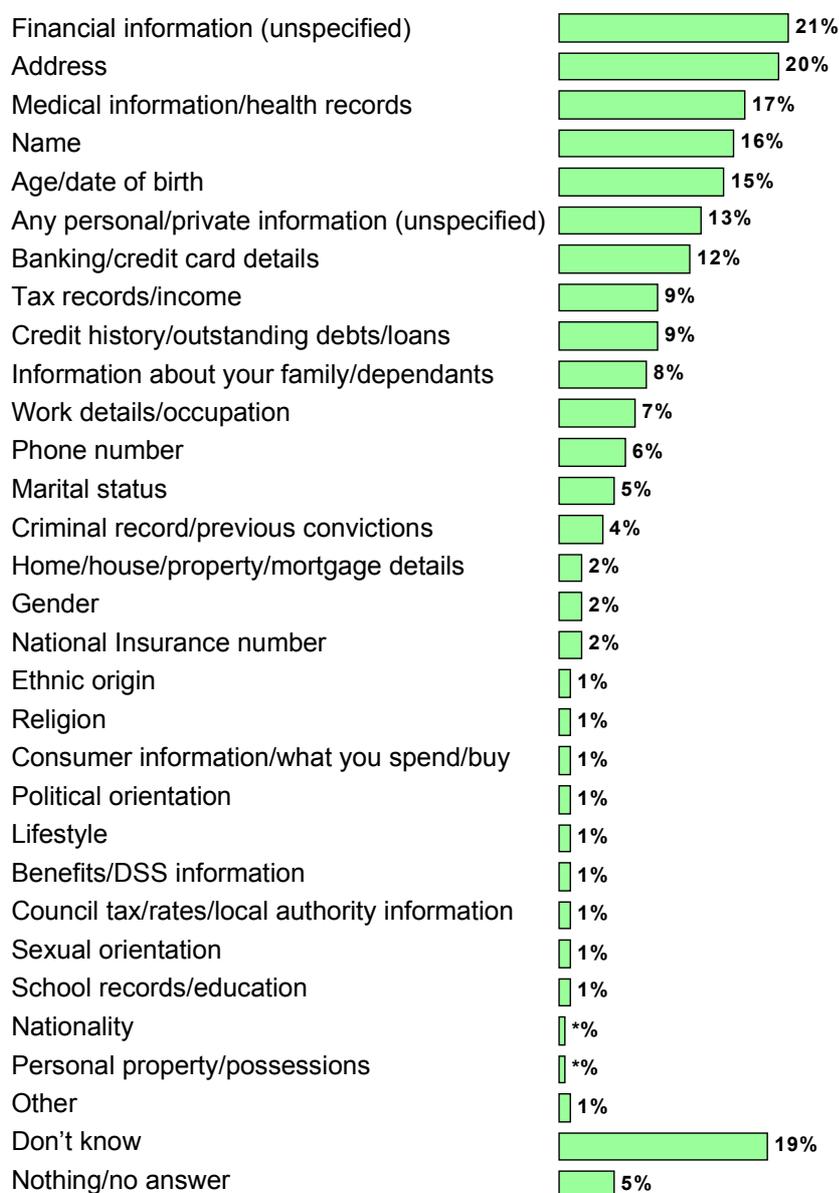
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When asked to define spontaneously what they see as personal information, people make a variety of suggestions, ranging from detailed items of personal information (such as bank details) through to lifestyle information (such as shopping habits). Twenty-four percent cannot define 'personal information' as being any particular aspect or say they do not know. Top mentions include financial information and address details as being 'personal' (21% and 20% respectively). This is followed by medical information (17%), name (16%), and age or date of birth (15%).

Younger people (aged 15-24) are less likely to mention financial information (13% compared to an average of 21%), while they are more likely to think of address details as being 'personal' (28% compared to 20% on average). Financial information and address details are also more frequently mentioned by the middle classes (social grades ABC1); 26% of these define financial information and 23% address details as being 'personal information'.

### Defining Personal Information

Q What sort of information do you think of when I say personal information?



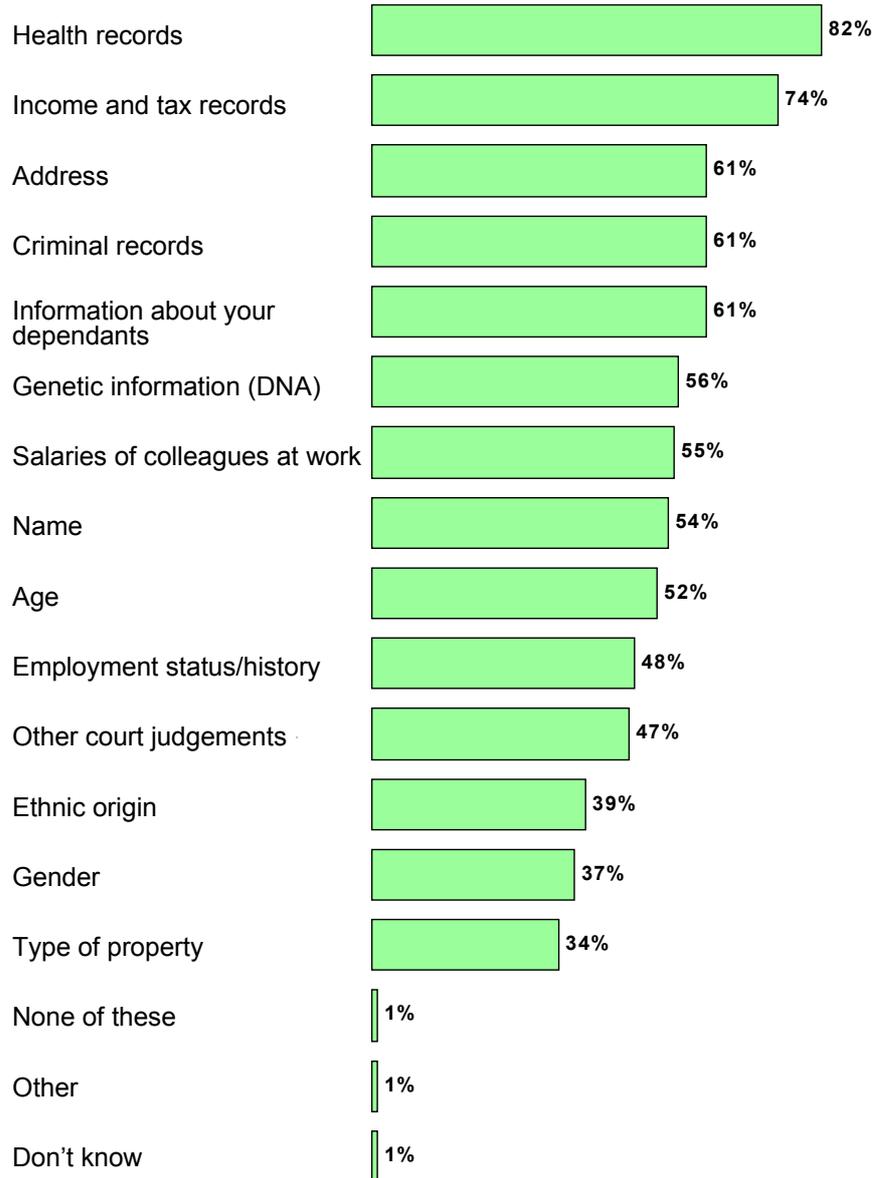
Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

When presented with a list of types of information, people appear to adopt a fairly wide definition of what constitutes ‘personal information’ with health records and income and tax records most prominent (82% and 74% respectively). In addition, address, criminal records, and information about dependants are all considered personal by 61% apiece. Gender and ethnicity are considered personal by 37% and 39% respectively.

### What is Personal Information?

Q Which of the items on this list, if any, do you consider to be personal information?



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

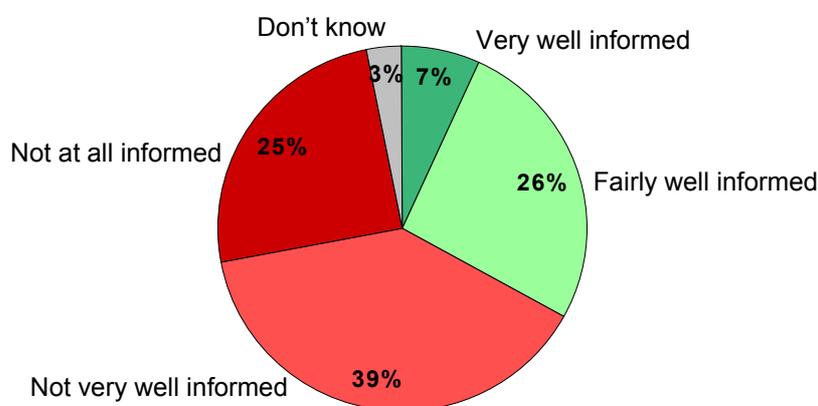
# Awareness of Privacy and Data Sharing

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The survey clearly reveals low levels of awareness in the general public around what information public services hold about them. The majority of the public (64%) say they do not feel well informed about what information is held, with 25% saying they are *not at all informed*.

## Level of Information

Q How well informed, if at all, do you feel about what personal information public services hold about you?



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

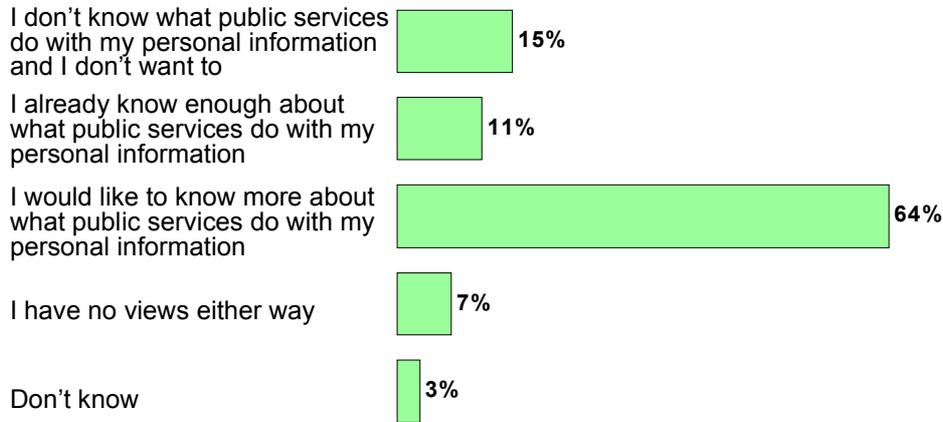
Level of information does not vary significantly by most demographic variables, although there are some regional variations with people in London being the most informed (45% very or fairly well informed) and those in Northern Ireland the least (18%).

## What the Public Want to Know

Despite relatively low levels of current awareness, the public would like to know more about how their personal information is handled (although it should be noted that this may not be a top of mind issue for many people). As the chart below illustrates, 64% say they want to know more, and only 11% feel they know enough about this issue already. Fifteen percent say the issue does not concern them at all, rising to 19% of young people.

## The Public Wants to Know More

Q Which of these statements is closest to how you feel about what public services do with your personal information?



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

The middle classes (those in social grade AB) are more likely to want to know more about what is done with their personal information (70% compared to 64% overall). They are also the group most likely to have the confidence and ability to find out this information, unlike more vulnerable groups. Unskilled manual workers/those living on benefits (social grade DE) are more likely to say they don't know what public services do with their personal information and they don't want to know (20% compared to 15% overall).

## Why is Information Shared?

Having established relatively low levels of awareness of how public services handle personal information, people were asked 'why' they thought public services shared information. The largest share (27%) say they *do not know* why public services share information.

As the table overleaf illustrates, people are not entirely negative about why information is shared and make a series of both negative and positive suggestions as to why this occurs.

Positively, 16% suggest this is to improve efficiency, 15% to stop fraud and 10% to fight crime. These statements are positive benefits to the government (i.e. systemic improvements) rather than improvements individuals might benefit from personally (three per cent say 'to make life easier for me' and two per cent say 'to deliver a personalised service'). However, some think there are more negative reasons for information sharing: 'to keep track of me' (13%) or to 'find out more about me' (8%), and nine per cent believe public services sell information for marketing purposes.

This reflects previous qualitative work<sup>3</sup>, which suggests people do not feel closely involved with the benefits of data-sharing and either cannot think of any, or associate them with improvements to the mechanics of government ‘behind the scenes’.

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**Q** *Public services do already share some types of personal information that they hold about people. Why do you think public services generally collect and share information? Why else?*

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| <i>Base: All respondents</i>  | <i>%</i> |
|---|----------|
| To improve their services/improve efficiency/avoid mistakes                           | 16       |
| To stop fraud   | 15       |
| To keep track of me   | 13       |
| To fight crime/protect us/keep us safe/security                                       | 10       |
| Because they need it to provide services  | 9        |
| To sell off the information for marketing purposes                                    | 9        |
| Because they want to know too much about me/find out more about you/nosey/Big Brother | 8        |
| For research  | 7        |
| So they don't have to keep asking me the same questions                               | 6        |
| To inform Government policy   | 5        |
| Because it's their job  | 5        |
| To make sure I pay my taxes   | 5        |
| Just in case they need it   | 5        |
| Bureaucracy/to keep records   | 4        |
| To make life easier for me  | 3        |
| For the sake of it  | 2        |
| To save money   | 2        |
| To deliver a personalised service   | 2        |
| To access your financial status/credit rating   | 2        |
| To pass on/share information  | 1        |
| To check employment record  | 1        |
| To get a view of the country/national trends  | 1        |
| To sell you something/to make money   | 1        |
| Statistics  | 1        |
| To target customers   | *        |
| To check your criminal record   | *        |
| To save time  | *        |
| Easier/more convenient for them   | *        |
| To protect themselves   | *        |
| To send junk mail   | *        |
| To control people   | *        |
| Voting/electoral roll   | *        |
| For future planning   | *        |
| To check medical records  | *        |
| Advertising   | *        |
| Other   | 2        |
| Don't know  | 27       |

*Source: MORI*

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Perri, *Strategies for Re-assurance: Public Concerns about Privacy and Data-sharing in Government*, MORI research conducted in conjunction with King's College London for the Performance and Innovation Unit, 2001.

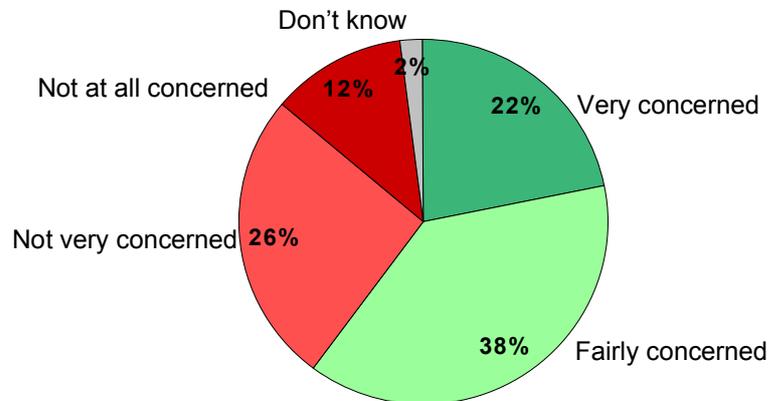
# Concerns around Privacy and Data Sharing

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Low awareness of how personal information is handled does not mean the public is not concerned about the issue. The majority of the public (60%) say they are very or fairly concerned about how their information is handled, with 22% being *very* concerned. Only 12% are not at all concerned.

## Level of Concern

Q How concerned, if at all, are you about public services sharing personal information about you?



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

Level of concern appears to become more intense with age. While the overall level of concern is similar, young people are more likely to say they are *fairly* concerned and less likely to say they are *very* concerned (and vice versa among older people). The number of people reporting they are *very* concerned rises from only 16% of 15-24 year olds to 27% of 55+ year olds. Does this reflect different levels of awareness, or a general lack of concern/acceptance that their personal data may be shared among younger people?

People in the West Midlands and London are most concerned (68% and 64% respectively), while people in the East Midlands and Northern Ireland are most likely to say they are not at all concerned (19% and 23% respectively).

People's main concerns centre on lack of control and lack of understanding about who or what is held. Again, this reflects findings from previous qualitative research<sup>4</sup>. Twenty-five percent fear they have *no control* over what is held, and similar proportions say they are worried because they do not know who has access (20%), what is held (18%) and how information is used (18%). Connected with concerns about control is the 16% who say their information should not be shared without their permission. There is also concern around whether information held is *accurate* (e.g. incorrect details, mixed up forms).

Of those who say they are to any degree concerned about data being shared, 18% say they don't know what their main concerns are. Unskilled manual workers/those living on benefits (DE) are particularly likely to not know what their concerns are (23%).

| <b>Q</b> | <b>What are your main concerns?</b>  |    |
|----------|--|----|
|          | <i>Base: All who say they are very, fairly or not very concerned (1,790)</i>     | %  |
|          | I have no control over my information  | 25 |
|          | I don't know <u>who will have access</u> to the information held/shared about me | 20 |
|          | I don't know <u>what</u> information is being held/shared about me               | 18 |
|          | I don't know <u>what is being done</u> with information held/shared about me     | 18 |
|          | Shouldn't share my information without asking my permission                      | 16 |
|          | I don't know <u>why</u> information is being held/shared about me                | 11 |
|          | The information held about me might be incorrect                                 | 10 |
|          | Worried about state knowing too much about me/big brother                        | 9  |
|          | I can't double check the information   | 6  |
|          | More people will know personal/ embarrassing details about me                    | 4  |
|          | My records might be mixed up with someone else's                                 | 4  |
|          | People might jump to conclusions about me  | 3  |
|          | Invasion of privacy  | 2  |
|          | I might be labelled as a particular type of person (e.g. troublemaker)           | 2  |
|          | Might include personal opinions as well as facts                                 | 2  |
|          | I don't know how to complain   | 1  |
|          | Might have data about me from a long time ago                                    | 1  |
|          | If I say no people will think I have something to hide                           | 1  |
|          | Might lose out on a service/benefit  | 1  |
|          | Might end up having to pay more taxes  | 1  |
|          | Information might be sold/passed on for commercial purposes                      | 1  |
|          | Lack of security   | 1  |
|          | Junk mail  | 1  |
|          | Information could be used for fraud/identity could be stolen                     | *  |
|          | Concerned/unhappy in general   | *  |
|          | Might include information about my family  | *  |
|          | Other  | 1  |
|          | Don't know   | 18 |
|          | None/no concerns   | 2  |

*Source: MORI*

<sup>4</sup> Dr Perri, *Strategies for Re-assurance: Public Concerns about Privacy and Data-sharing in Government*, MORI research conducted in conjunction with King's College London for the Performance and Innovation Unit, 2001.

## **Personal Information Scenarios**

Respondents' reactions to a series of scenarios of information sharing were tested. Scenarios included both 'positive' situations (e.g. authorities checking to see if you were eligible for additional benefits) and 'negative' situations (e.g. schools passing details of truant children to the police). A fairly consistent pattern emerges throughout the scenarios of around 46-51% saying they would *be not at all concerned* about each instance of information sharing, and a further 24-28% being *not very concerned*.

This is not out of line with previous research, for example a MORI poll in 2001 which found 85% support for a national identity card scheme, and that only 22% thought it would infringe personal freedom<sup>5</sup> (though it should be noted that this survey was conducted shortly after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks).

In fact, people are most concerned about their local authority using a central database of residents to speed up responses to enquiries (37% very or fairly concerned). Although MORI's previous research has found that contacting local authorities is an area of discontent for local residents and one where local authorities would be advised to improve their data sharing capabilities, it seems residents are perhaps wary of the terminology and concept of a 'central database' to which all departments would have access. The concern about local authorities using a central database to speed up responses to enquiries is highest in the West Midlands (46% are very or fairly concerned) and lowest in the East Midlands (26% very or fairly concerned).

Further (perhaps qualitative) research may help to unpick some of the findings. For example, the two situations which provoke least concern are both positive – passing information on to the Benefits Agency to see if you qualify for benefits, and passing medical records to social services to provide you with aftercare. However, these also concern the two issues which we know are most likely to be described as 'personal' – health and financial records.

There is a slight pattern for people who have already given their personal information to the service concerned, to be less concerned. This particularly applies to people who have contacted their local council: 37% of these say they would be not at all concerned if it set up a central database, compared to 32% overall. Similarly, 56% of people who have contacted the Inland Revenue say they would be not at all concerned if their income details were passed to the Benefits Agency to check for fraud (compared to 48% overall). The exception is people who have obtained a driving license. Forty-four percent of these say they would be not at all concerned if the DVLA passed on their details to the police, compared to 54% who have given their details to the police.

In most cases, people who have not given their personal information to any public service in the last year are the most likely to be concerned about each of the scenarios. Of course, they may not have passed on their details precisely because they have higher concerns.

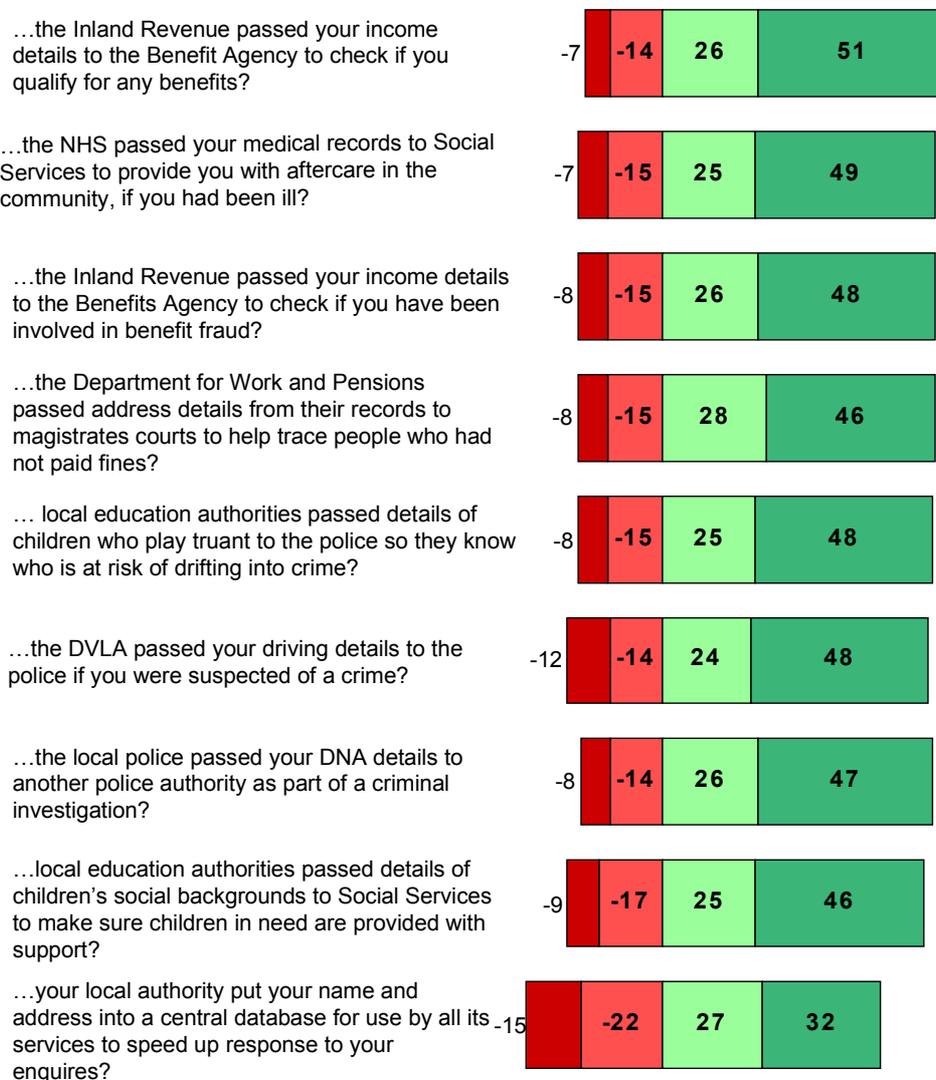
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<sup>5</sup> Atkinson, S. & Elgood, J. *Identity Cards Poll, MORI research conducted for News of the World, 2001.*

### Concern Around Personal Information

Q How concerned, if at all, would you be if . . . ?

■ % Very concerned    ■ % Fairly concerned    ■ % Not very concerned    ■ % Not at all concerned



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

There are some differences by social class and level of education, with the middle classes most likely to say they are *not at all concerned*. For example, those without formal qualifications are more likely to be very or fairly concerned than others (29% compared with 23%) about the Inland Revenue passing their details to the Benefits Agency to check if they have been involved in fraud. Similarly, concern around passing details to trace people who did not pay fines varies by social class (only six per cent of the middle classes (AB) are *very* concerned compared with 12% of unskilled manual workers/those living on benefits (DE)). This may reflect the fact that the unskilled/those living on benefits have a very different relationship with the Benefits Agency than the middle classes. Furthermore,

those in the middle classes are less likely to be concerned (52% not at all concerned compared to 47% average) if the DVLA passed their details to the police if they were suspected of the crime. This may be because people feel less concerned about issues which they do not feel would impact upon them – taking an attitude of ‘that would never apply to me’. For example, concern about LEAs passing details of children’s backgrounds to social services is highest among 25-44 year olds (those most likely to have children at home). Alternatively, it may reflect different attitudes to government, and self-confidence – the middle classes may feel more confident about complaining to a public service if they felt their information was misused.

The table overleaf shows the proportion of people in different social classes and age groups who say they are *not at all concerned*, and it highlights the general trend for those in the middle classes (AB) to be less concerned about each scenario. It also illustrates that younger people tend to be less likely to say they are not at all concerned – this is despite the fact that earlier they were less likely to be *very* concerned in general.

**Level of Concern around Personal Information Scenarios – % Not at all concerned**

|   | Class |    |    |    | Age   |       |       |     |  |
|---|-------|----|----|----|-------|-------|-------|-----|--|
|   | AB    | C1 | C2 | DE | 15-24 | 25-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |  |
| Your local authority put your name and address into a central database  | 38    | 32 | 30 | 29 | 23    | 26    | 37    | 36  |  |
| The Inland Revenue passed your income details to the Benefits Agency to check if you had been involved in benefit fraud         | 53    | 48 | 47 | 45 | 34    | 49    | 53    | 51  |  |
| The Inland Revenue passed your income details to the Benefit Agency to check if you qualify for any benefits                    | 56    | 51 | 50 | 49 | 36    | 53    | 56    | 53  |  |
| The NHS passed your medical records to Social Services to provide you with aftercare in the community if you had been ill       | 56    | 46 | 46 | 49 | 34    | 48    | 50    | 56  |  |
| The local police passed your DNA details to another police authority as part of a criminal investigation                        | 51    | 48 | 47 | 44 | 30    | 44    | 51    | 54  |  |
| The DVLA passed your details to the police if you were suspected of a crime   | 52    | 47 | 44 | 44 | 31    | 46    | 52    | 50  |  |
| The DWP passed address details from their records to magistrates courts to help trace people who had not paid fines             | 48    | 49 | 46 | 41 | 33    | 38    | 51    | 51  |  |
| LEAs passed details of children's social backgrounds to social services to make sure children in need are provided with support | 50    | 46 | 46 | 45 | 37    | 43    | 48    | 51  |  |
| LEAs passed details of children who play truant to the police so they know who is at risk of drifting into crime                | 53    | 46 | 49 | 46 | 34    | 48    | 51    | 53  |  |

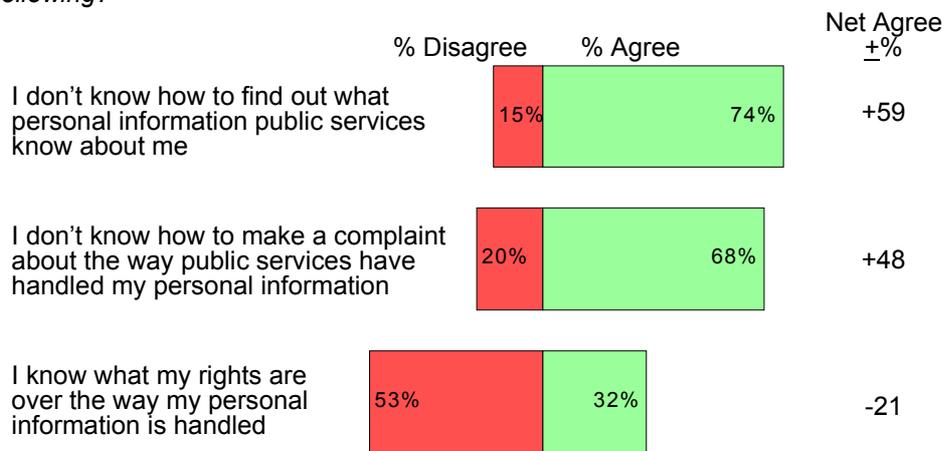
Base: all respondents (2,098) Source: MORI

## Rights Around Personal Information

The public also feel under-informed about their rights regarding personal information. Seventy-four percent say they do not know how to find out what information is held about them and a further 68% do not know how to make a complaint about information handling. Only 32% agree that they know their rights regarding how their personal information is handled, while the majority disagrees with this statement (53%).

### Rights around Personal Information

Q Could you please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following?



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

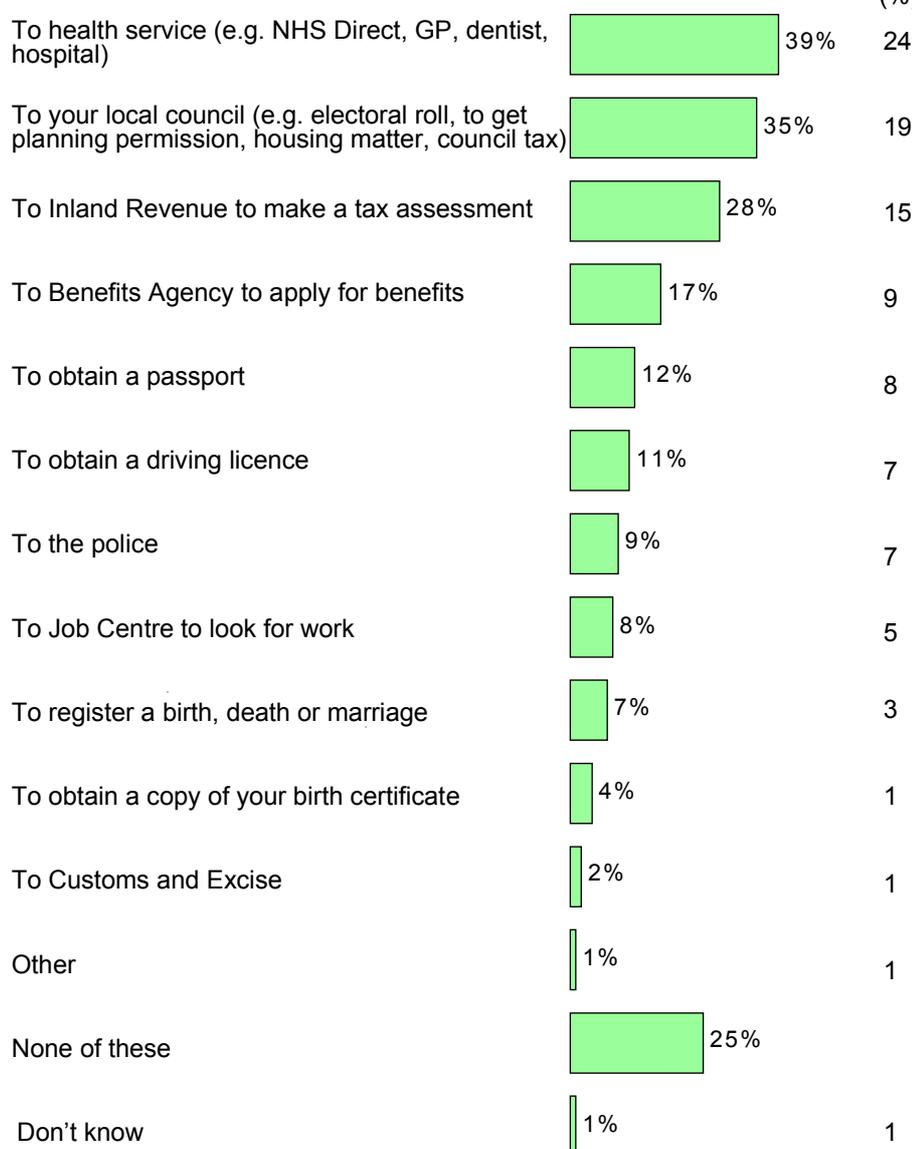
# Experience of Data Sharing

In terms of individual experience of giving out personal information, 25% say they have not divulged personal information in the last 12 months. These people tend to be older (34% of those aged 55 or over) or living in London (36%). The remainder report giving out information to a variety of public services. Top mentions include to health services (39%), local councils (35%) and Inland Revenue (28%). The figures in the right hand column identify which information was given most recently, and follow a similar pattern.

## Giving out Personal Information

Q In the last 12 months, to which of the following, if any, have you given your personal information?

Q Which was the most recent? Most recent (%)



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

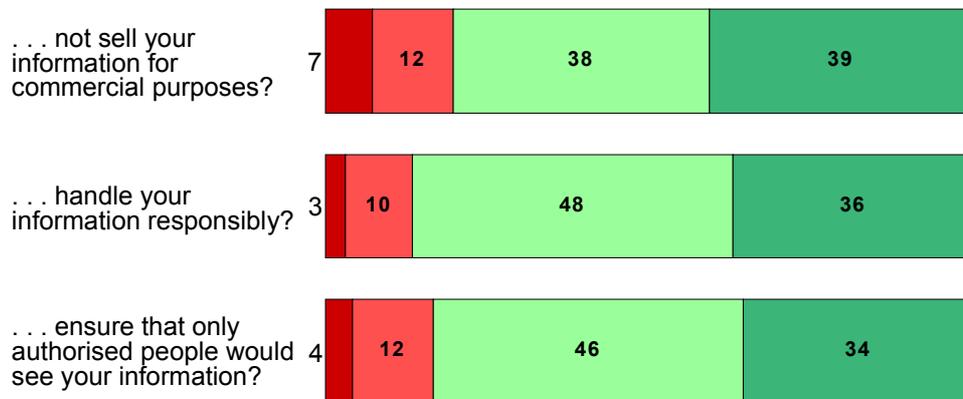
## Trusting Public Services

When considering recent experience, the public appear to adopt a fairly ‘nonchalant’ attitude towards public services, with the majority trusting public services to handle their information appropriately. This may partly reflect the good faith the public has in doctors and the NHS, who are the largest single contact, though this will not account for the full story. Thirteen percent say they do not trust public services in their handling of information and 19% do not trust public services not to sell their information for commercial purposes.

### Trusting Public Services with Personal Information

Q And thinking about the most recent time you gave your personal information to a public service, how much, if at all, did you trust that particular public service to . . .

■ % Not at all ■ % Not very much ■ % A fair amount ■ % A great deal



Base: All who have given their personal information in the last 12 months (1,545)

Source: MORI

Those in the middle social classes (ABC1) are more likely to trust public services to handle information responsibly than working class people/those living on benefits (C2DE), as the table below shows.

#### *Level of trust in Public Services handling personal information – % A great deal/fair amount*

|  | Class |    |    |    |
|--|-------|----|----|----|
|  | AB    | C1 | C2 | DE |
| And thinking about the most recent time you gave your personal information to a public service, how much, if at all, did you trust that particular service to..... |       |    |    |    |
| ...not sell your information for commercial purposes?  | 80    | 81 | 73 | 72 |
| ...handle your information responsibly?  | 87    | 88 | 82 | 79 |
| ...ensure that only authorised people would see your information?  | 83    | 83 | 78 | 76 |

Source: MORI

The level of trust varies according to *which* public service people have been in contact with. There is a consistent trend that people place greater trust in the police, Passport Agency and health service providers to handle their information than their local council, Benefits Agency and Job Centre. For example, 90% of those who have given their personal information to the police or Passport Agency say they trusted them to handle their information responsibly, while the corresponding figure for those giving their details to a Job Centre is 77%. Similarly, 92% trusted the police to not sell their information for commercial purposes while only 67% say the same about their local council – indeed, 28% say they did *not* trust the local council to not sell their information.

**Q** *Thinking about the most recent time you gave your personal information to a public service, how much, if at all, did you trust that particular public service to handle your information responsibly?*

|               | Total   | Service provided information to |                 |            |                |                 |        |
|---------------|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|
|               |         | Local Council                   | Benefits Agency | Job Centre | Health Service | Passport Agency | Police |
| Base:         | (1,545) | (299)                           | (159)           | (76)       | (357)          | (116)           | (101)  |
|               | %       | %                               | %               | %          | %              | %               | %      |
| A great deal  | 36      | 20                              | 33              | 31         | 40             | 45              | 52     |
| A fair amount | 48      | 58                              | 46              | 46         | 48             | 45              | 38     |
| Not very much | 10      | 15                              | 14              | 15         | 5              | 7               | 6      |
| Not at all    | 3       | 3                               | 5               | 3          | 2              | 1               | 0      |
| Don't know    | 3       | 4                               | 1               | 5          | 5              | 2               | 4      |

Source: MORI

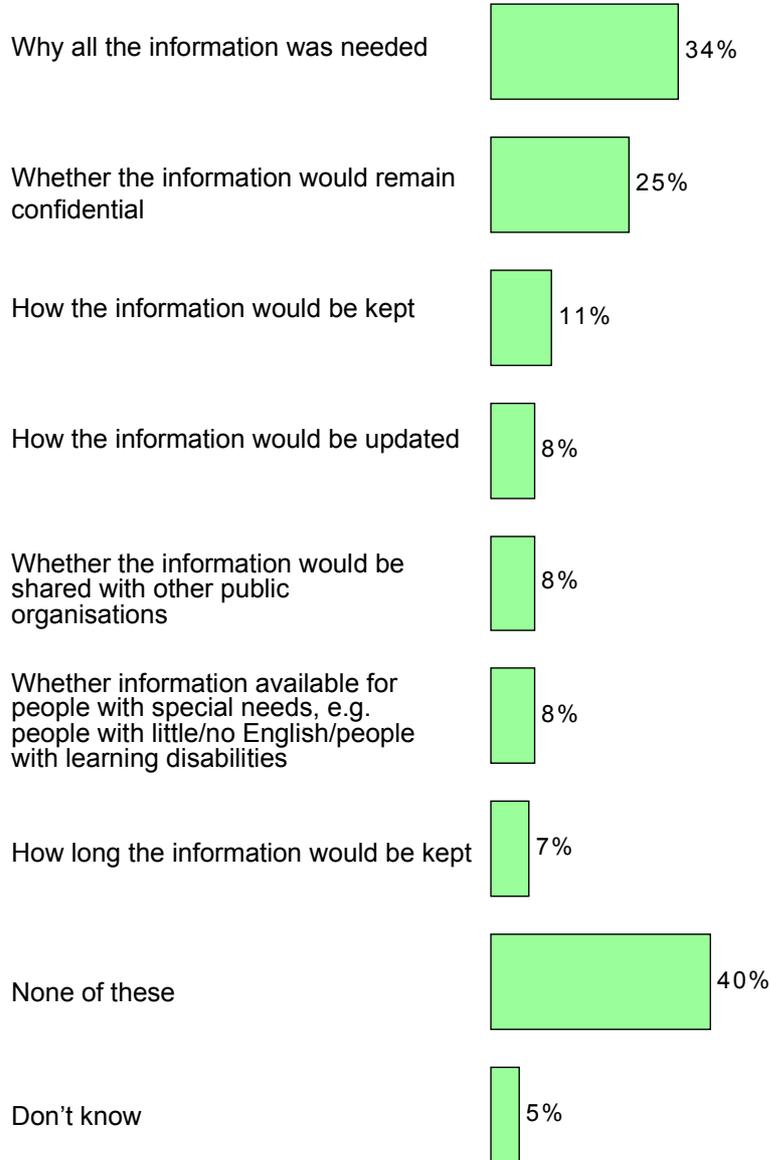
People in the North East and Yorks & Humber are most likely to trust public services to handle their information responsibly (91% and 92% respectively), while it is lower in London (83%).

## Information Provided when Giving Out Personal Details

Of those providing personal information, 40% say they were not given any contextual information about *why* information is collected or how it would be *updated* or *managed*. Thirty-four percent recall being told why information was needed and 25% recall confidentiality being highlighted.

**Information Provided when giving Personal Details**

Q *And still thinking about when you last gave your personal information to a public service, which of these, if any, were you told about?*



Base: All who have given their personal information in the last 12 months (1,545)

Source: MORI

Whether people were given *all* of this information does not appear to directly impact on people's trust in how these public services handle personal information. As many as 46% of those who had given their details to a health service provider, which we have found are one of the public services that are most trusted to deal with personal information, were not given any of this information, compared to 38% of those giving details to their local council.



### Demanding Personal Information

Q Have you ever wanted to ask a public service to tell you what information it holds about you and not done so for any reason? Why didn't you?



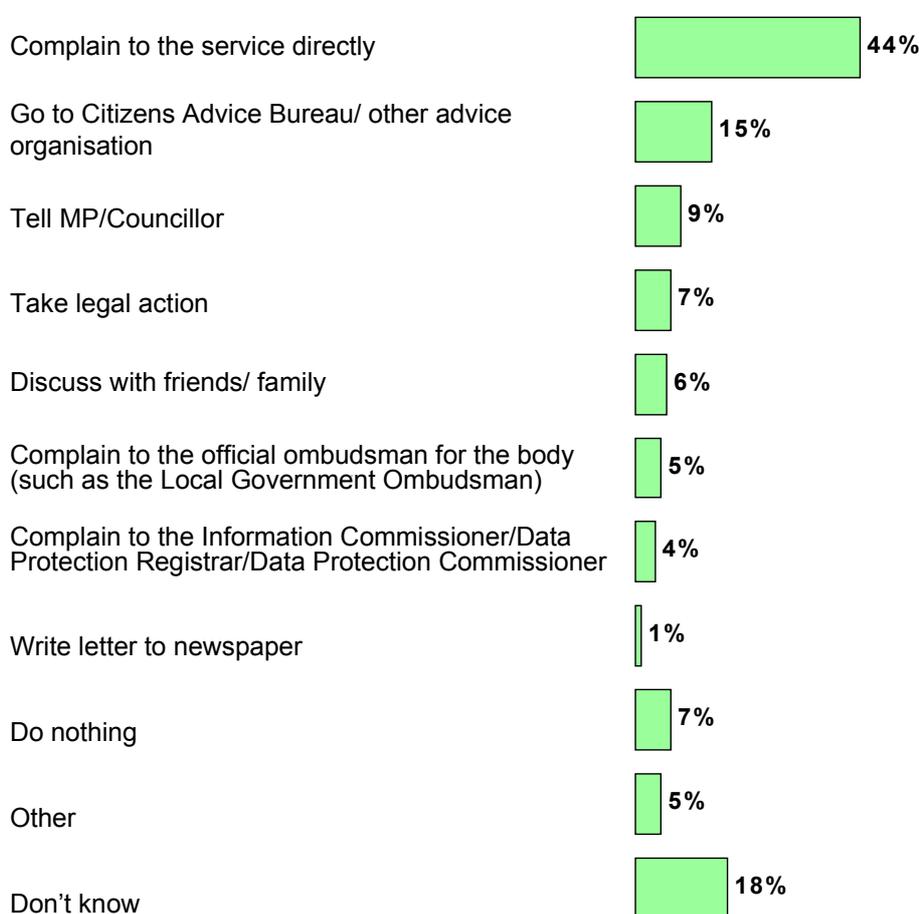
Base: All who ever wanted to ask a public service about what personal information it holds about them (208)

Source: MORI

When contemplating who to complain to if they had a problem with the way their personal information was used, most say they would complain to the service directly (44%) with a further 15% saying they would approach CAB or other advice organisations. Only around four per cent spontaneously say they would go to the Information or Data Protection Commissioner. This is slightly higher among those educated to A-level (7%) and graduates (6%), than those with no formal qualifications, as well as among those living in London (7%).

### Making a Complaint

Q *If you were not happy with the way a public service has used your personal information what, if anything, do you think you would do?*



Base: All respondents (2,098)

Source: MORI

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# Appendices

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## Statistical Reliability

Because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed the percentage results are subject to sampling tolerances – which vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in a (weighted) sample of 2,098 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than 2 percentage points, plus or minus, from the result that would have been obtained from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures). The tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

| <b>Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels (at the 95% confidence level)</b> |                         |                         |                  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
|  | <b>10% or 90%<br/>±</b> | <b>30% or 70%<br/>±</b> | <b>50%<br/>±</b> |
| <b>Size of sample or sub-group on which survey result is based</b>   |                         |                         |                  |
| Total sample (1,986)   | 1                       | 2                       | 2                |
| <i>Source: MORI</i>  |                         |                         |                  |

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements of the sample. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons between sub-groups.

| <b>Differences required for significance at the 95% confidence level at or near these percentages</b> |                         |                         |                  |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
|   | <b>10% or 90%<br/>±</b> | <b>30% or 70%<br/>±</b> | <b>50%<br/>±</b> |
| <b>Size of sample on which survey result is based</b>   |                         |                         |                  |
| Men (1,015) vs. Women (1,083)   | 3                       | 4                       | 4                |
| Social group AB (368) vs. DE (660)  | 4                       | 6                       | 6                |
| 15-24 yrs old (320) vs. 55+ (745)   | 4                       | 6                       | 7                |
| <i>Source: MORI</i>   |                         |                         |                  |

## Definition of Social Grades

The grades detailed below are the social class definitions as used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, and are standard on all surveys carried out by MORI (Market & Opinion Research International Limited).

| <b>Social Grades</b> |   |  |                                 |
|----------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
|                      | <b>Social Class</b>                       | <b>Occupation of Chief Income Earner</b>                                     | <b>Percentage of Population</b> |
| A                    | Upper Middle Class                        | Higher managerial, administrative or professional                            | 3.0                             |
| B                    | Middle Class                              | Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional                      | 20.8                            |
| C1                   | Lower Middle Class                        | Supervisor or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional | 27.3                            |
| C2                   | Skilled Working Class                     | Skilled manual workers   | 21.2                            |
| D                    | Working Class                             | Semi and unskilled manual workers  | 17.4                            |
| E                    | Those at the lowest levels of subsistence | State pensioners, etc, with no other earnings                                | 10.3                            |