**Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Confidentiality of Consultations**

The Department intends to publish a summary of responses following completion of this exercise. Your response, and all other responses, may also be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations. They will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this call for views.

Subject to certain limited provisos, the Freedom of Information Act gives members of the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case, the Department. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation.

The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this call for views, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor’s Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

* the Department should only accept information from third parties “in confidence” if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department’s functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
* the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties “in confidence” which is not confidential in nature;
* acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

Further information about confidentiality of responses is available by contacting the Information Commissioner’s Office or at Information Commissioner Website [Home | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/).