

Data matching exercise by the Comptroller and Auditor General to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud in public funds.

The Livestock and Meat Commission is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. As outlined in our Privacy Policy for Employees, we have a legal obligation to share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The Comptroller and Auditor General audits the accounts of this non-departmental public body. The Comptroller and Auditor General is also responsible for carrying out data matching exercises under his powers in Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal data, specifically that which is held on our payroll, sales and purchase databases. Computerised data matching allows fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found, it may indicate that there is an inconsistency which requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The Comptroller and Auditor General currently requires us to participate in a data matching exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. We are required to provide particular sets of data to the Comptroller and Auditor General for matching. Details are set out in the Northern Ireland Audit Office's website, www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

The use of data by the Comptroller and Auditor General in a data matching exercise is carried out with statutory authority. It does not require the consent of the individuals concerned under the EU General Data Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Data matching by the Comptroller and Auditor General is subject to a Code of Practice. This may be found at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk. In line with data protection legislation the Comptroller and Auditor General will dispose of personal data in accordance with the National Fraud Initiative Data Deletion Schedule. This will be published on the Cabinet Office's NFI web page at www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative.

For further information on the Comptroller and Auditor General's legal powers and the reasons why he matches particular information, see the NIAO website at www.niauditoffice.gov.uk.

For further information on data matching at this non-departmental public body, contact Suzanne Blain (028 9263 3000).