



National Fraud Initiative

The Consumer Council is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may 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 The Consumer Council. The Comptroller and Auditor General is also responsible for carrying out data matching exercises by virtue of his powers under Articles 4A to 4G of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Data matching involves comparing the computer records held by different bodies to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found it indicates that there may be an inconsistency which requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there has been fraud, error or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

The Comptroller and Auditor General requires The Consumer Council to participate in a data matching exercise in 2020-21 to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. This involves providing particular sets of data including payroll information to the Comptroller and Auditor General. Further details of the data to be provided are set out on the Northern Ireland Audit Office website at <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative>

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 individual concerned under the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR.

The data matching exercise is subject to a code of practice. This may be found at <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/national-fraud-initiative>

For further information on the Comptroller and Auditor General's legal powers and the reasons for matching particular information, please contact John French (02890251656) or Paula McCann (02890251507).