

Data protection in simple terms



This fact sheet provides a quick overview of the key principles of the Data Protection Act and how this applies to the handling of information in your organisation.

Key principles:

- Information may only be used for the specific purposes for which it was collected.
- Information must not be disclosed to other parties without the consent of the individual whom it is about, unless there is legislation or other overriding legitimate reason to share the information (for example, the prevention or detection of crime). It is an offence for other parties to obtain this personal data without authorisation.
- Individuals have a right of access to the information held about them, subject to certain exceptions (for example, information held for the prevention or detection of crime).
- Personal information may be kept for no longer than is necessary and must be kept up to date.
- Personal information may not be sent outside the European Economic Area unless the individual whom it is about has consented or adequate protection is in place, for example by the use of a prescribed form of contract to govern the transmission of the data.
- Subject to some exceptions for organisations that only do very simple processing, and for domestic use, all entities that process personal information must register with the Information Commissioner's Office.
- Entities holding personal information are required to have adequate security measures in place. Those include technical measures (such as firewalls) and organisational measures (such as staff training).
- Subjects have the right to have *factually incorrect* information corrected (note: this does not extend to matters of *opinion*)



Guiding principles:

In addition, all organisations dealing with personal information must adhere to the values of:

Transparency – individuals should have a clear and unambiguous understanding of why their personal data is being collected and for what purpose it will be used.

Consent – individuals must give their consent at the time their information is collected, with the opportunity to opt-out of any further uses of this information.