

Data protection - the fundamentals

Oh, data protection regulations - the perfect party topic, right? Well, maybe not, but they are pretty important. The (UK) GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 are here to make sure businesses treat personal information like delicate China teacups (carefully, that is). So, let's dive into the basic essentials of UK data protection compliance.

Hire a Data Protection Superhero (DPO)

Think of a Data Protection Officer (DPO) as your company's data guardian angel. While not every business needs one, if you're dealing with heaps of sensitive data, you'd better get one on your team. Your DPO will be the go-to person for all things data protection and will keep the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the loop. Even if a DPO is not required, we would recommend nominating someone at your organisation who will be responsible for data compliance. Learn more about DPOs [here](#).

Map your data like a pirate

Arrr, matey! Time to create a treasure map of your personal data. Data mapping helps you understand what personal data you have, where it's hiding, and how you use it. Without this map it is hard to create relevant policies or otherwise show how you are being accountable. Knowing this will help you find the "X" that marks the spot for compliance. **Here** are some useful tips on the mapping process but if you need any support on this front then please feel free to **get in touch**.

Craft data protection policies worthy of a bestseller

Your data protection policies and procedures should be so clear that they could win literary awards. Cover all the important topics, from data collection to secure transfers, and make sure everyone in the company knows these policies like the back of their hand.

lawbox design

Note, whilst policies may look the same between organisations, the content needs to vary and reflect what you actually do, otherwise they won't be compliant.

Train your employees like data protection ninjas

Knowledge is power! Train your employees on data protection policies and regulations like they're training for a top-secret ninja mission. Keep the training fresh and ongoing so everyone stays in tip-top data protection shape.

Keep a data diary

The GDPR wants you to be a bit of a data detective, keeping meticulous records of your data processing activities. Be prepared to show your data diary to the ICO if they come knocking. Learn more about record keeping [here](#).

Design with privacy in mind

Imagine your products, services, and processes are like a cosy blanket fort - privacy should be built right in. This is called "data protection by design," and it means privacy should be a priority from the get-go. Also, practise "data protection by default" by only using the bare minimum of personal data for your purposes. Making this a priority will also allow you to have a data set which is compliant, up-to-date and able to bring most value to your business.

Keep third-party data processors on a short leash

Sometimes you need a little help from your friends (or third-party processors). Make sure you have a written contract with them that clearly defines their data protection responsibilities. Keep an eye on their practices and make sure they're playing by the rules. Check out the ICO's guidance on contracts [here](#).

Be ready for data breaches (fingers crossed you won't need this)

Let's face it; data breaches are about as fun as a root canal. But you should still have a response plan ready, just in case. Know how to detect, investigate, and report breaches to the ICO and the affected individuals within 72 hours. Learn more about breach reporting [here](#).

What next?

Managing the data that flows through your business can be a bit daunting but it's not something you should bury your head in the sand over. If you want to get on top of things but you're not quite sure where to start, **give us a shout** and see if we can help.

