

New data protection advice service aimed at small organisations preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) will launch a dedicated advice line on Wednesday 1 November at 10am to help small organisations prepare for a new data protection law.

The phone service is aimed at people running small businesses or charities and recognises the particular problems they face getting ready for the new law, called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The GDPR replaces the current Data Protection Act and comes into force on 25 May 2018. Regulated by the ICO, the GDPR strengthens the rules around personal data and requires organisations to be more accountable and transparent. It also gives people greater control over their own personal data.

There are already [resources on the ICO website](http://ico.org.uk) (ico.org.uk) to help organisations employing fewer than 250 people prepare for the GDPR. But the new phone line will offer additional, personal advice to small organisations that still have questions.

People from small organisations should dial the ICO helpline on 0303 123 1113 and select option 4 to be diverted to staff who can offer support. As well as advice on preparing for the GDPR, callers can also ask questions about current data protection rules and other legislation regulated by the ICO including electronic marketing and Freedom of Information.

Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said:

"All organisations have to get ready for the new data protection rules, but we recognise that the 5.4 million small organisations in the UK face particular challenges.

"Small organisations want to be ready when the new law comes into force in May 2018, but they often struggle to know where to start. They may have less time and money to invest in getting it right and are less likely to have compliance teams, data protection officers or legal experts to advise them what to do.

"Our new phone service and all the other resources already on our website plus even more advice and guidance yet to come will help steer small businesses through the new law."

In addition to the new phone service, the ICO has also announced plans to simplify its popular ["12 steps to take now"](#) graphic in response to calls from small and micro businesses that they need access to targeted information about how to prepare for the GDPR.

And the ICO is revising its [simple-to-use SME toolkit](#) – a resource used by around 9,000 businesses a month since January 2016 – into a GDPR resource that will allow businesses themselves to identify gaps in their own preparation for the new law.

Organisations that have yet to begin preparing for the law change can access a range of resources on the ICO's dedicated data protection reform web pages.

The "12 steps to take now" graphic has been viewed 73,000 times since it was updated in May and is the most downloaded document on the ICO website.

ICO staff have spoken at nearly 100 stakeholder events where “getting ready for the GDPR” has been a key theme and around 10,000 people have viewed sector-specific webinars highlighting GDPR issues.

By the end of the year, the ICO will publish a Guide to the GDPR. It expands the content of the current overview to make it a comprehensive guide along the same lines as the current Guide to Data Protection.

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner’s Office upholds information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.
2. The ICO has specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
3. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new law that will replace the Data Protection Act 1998 and will apply in the UK from 25 May 2018. The government has confirmed that the UK’s decision to leave the EU will not affect the commencement of the GDPR.
4. The ICO can take action to change the behaviour of organisations and individuals that collect, use and keep personal information. This includes criminal prosecution, non-criminal enforcement and audit. The ICO has the power to impose a monetary penalty on a data controller of up to £500,000.
5. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles of the Data Protection Act, which make sure that personal information is:
 - fairly and lawfully processed;
 - processed for limited purposes;
 - adequate, relevant and not excessive;
 - accurate and up to date;
 - not kept for longer than is necessary;
 - processed in line with your rights;
 - secure; and
 - not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.
6. Civil Monetary Penalties (CMPs) are subject to a right of appeal to the (First-tier Tribunal) General Regulatory Chamber against the imposition of the monetary penalty and/or the amount of the penalty specified in the monetary penalty notice.
7. Any monetary penalty is paid into the Treasury’s Consolidated Fund and is not kept by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).
8. To report a concern to the ICO telephone our helpline 0303 123 1113 or go to ico.org.uk/concerns.