



Data Protection Act 2018

2018 CHAPTER 12

PART 1

PRELIMINARY

3 Terms relating to the processing of personal data

- (1) This section defines some terms used in this Act.
- (2) “Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual (subject to subsection (14)(c)).
- (3) “Identifiable living individual” means a living individual who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to—
 - (a) an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data or an online identifier, or
 - (b) one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.
- (4) “Processing”, in relation to information, means an operation or set of operations which is performed on information, or on sets of information, such as—
 - (a) collection, recording, organisation, structuring or storage,
 - (b) adaptation or alteration,
 - (c) retrieval, consultation or use,
 - (d) disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available,
 - (e) alignment or combination, or
 - (f) restriction, erasure or destruction,(subject to subsection (14)(c) and sections 5(7), 29(2) and 82(3), which make provision about references to processing in the different Parts of this Act).
- (5) “Data subject” means the identified or identifiable living individual to whom personal data relates.

Changes to legislation: Data Protection Act 2018, Section 3 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

- (6) “Controller” and “processor”, in relation to the processing of personal data to which ^{F1}... Part 2, Part 3 or Part 4 applies, have the same meaning as in that ^{F1}... Part (see sections 5, 6, 32 and 83 and see also subsection (14)(d)).
- (7) “Filing system” means any structured set of personal data which is accessible according to specific criteria, whether held by automated means or manually and whether centralised, decentralised or dispersed on a functional or geographical basis.
- (8) “The Commissioner” means the Information Commissioner (see section 114).
- (9) “The data protection legislation” means—
 - ^{F2}(a) the UK GDPR,]
 - ^{F3}(b)
 - (c) this Act,
 - (d) regulations made under this Act, and
 - (e) regulations made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 which relate to [^{F4}the EU GDPR] or the Law Enforcement Directive.
- (10) “[^{F5}The UK GDPR]” means [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data [^{F6}(United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation), as it forms part of the law of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland by virtue of section 3 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (and see section 205(4))].
- [^{F7}(10A) “The EU GDPR” means Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27th April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation) as it has effect in EU law.]
- ^{F8}(11)
- (12) “The Law Enforcement Directive” means [Directive \(EU\) 2016/680](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA.
- (13) “The Data Protection Convention” means the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data which was opened for signature on 28 January 1981, as amended up to the day on which this Act is passed.
- (14) In Parts 5 to 7, except where otherwise provided—
 - [^{F9}(a) references to the UK GDPR are to the UK GDPR read with Part 2;]
 - ^{F10}(b)
 - (c) references to personal data, and the processing of personal data, are to personal data and processing to which ^{F11}... Part 2, Part 3 or Part 4 applies;
 - (d) references to a controller or processor are to a controller or processor in relation to the processing of personal data to which ^{F12}... Part 2, Part 3 or Part 4 applies.
- (15) There is an index of defined expressions in section 206.

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Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 3(6) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(2)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F2** S. 3(9)(a) substituted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(3)(a)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F3** S. 3(9)(b) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(3)(b)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F4** Words in s. 3(9)(e) substituted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(3)(c)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F5** Words in s. 3(10) substituted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(4)(a)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F6** Words in s. 3(10) substituted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(4)(b)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F7** S. 3(10A) inserted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(5)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F8** S. 3(11) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(6)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F9** S. 3(14)(a) substituted (31.12.2020) by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(7)(a)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F10** S. 3(14)(b) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(7)(b)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F11** Words in s. 3(14)(c) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(7)(c)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F12** Words in s. 3(14)(d) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/419), reg. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 4(7)(c)** (with reg. 5); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- Sch. 3 para. 8(1)(y) added by [2022 c. 18 \(N.I.\) Sch. 3 para. 78\(3\)](#)