



heath help with

the data protection act 1998

- **What is The Data Protection Act 1998 about?** The Data Protection Act (DPA) gives individuals the right to know what information is held about them. It provides a framework to ensure that personal information is handled properly.
- **Which aspects of data handling does it cover?** It covers obtaining, disclosing, recording, holding, using, erasing or destroying personal information.
- **How does it work?** The Act works in two ways. Firstly it provides eight principles (see page two) around how the data held is used and secondly it gives individuals rights to allow them to find out what kind of their own personal details organisations are holding, and may be using.
- **How do organisations sign up to the Act?** 'Signing up' or 'Registering' to the DPA is called 'Notification'. It costs £35 and you can notify at www.ico.gov.uk
- **How do I know if I need to notify?** Most businesses will need to notify, but there are exemptions. You *may* not need to notify if you only process personal information for core business purposes such as your own marketing, staff administration and accounting, but it is advisable to check first. This can also be done via www.ico.gov.uk.
- **The DPA only affects online data doesn't it?** No. If you keep paper records which are sorted by reference to the individual, the Act still applies. There are a few exceptions, but the reality is that most business will need to register.
- **Is there anything else I need to do once I've notified?** Yes, once you've notified you need to ensure that your staff understand and abide by the eight DPA principles. You must also renew notification every year – the current fee is £35.00

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Please note that this information is for guidance purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Eight principles of The Data Protection Act 1998

Data should be:

- 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
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection