

6-Point Plan for HR Practitioners

The Data Protection Act 2024 will revolutionise how personal data is handled by companies. For HR departments, compliance is not optional – it is essential.

1. Understand the Impact of the DPA on HR Processes

The Data Protection Act, which came into effect in October 2024, introduces a new approach to how personal data must be managed. Its principles apply directly to HR departments, which act as custodians of vast amounts of employee data. HR professionals must understand the impact and significance of the DPA, which governs the collection, processing, and storage of employee data in a lawful, transparent, and secure manner.

2. Review What Data is Being Collected

Review the data you collect throughout the employee lifecycle. Are you collecting only what is necessary, or are you also gathering non-essential information?

The **data minimisation** principle of the DPA requires that only data strictly necessary for a specific purpose is collected.

3. Assess How and What Data is Being Stored

Whether in physical files or electronic systems such as ESS and HRIS platforms, HR departments often store large volumes of data – sometimes for indefinite periods or until a system upgrade forces a clean-up.

Data retention and **secure storage** are critical elements of the DPA. You must develop clear retention schedules and storage policies to ensure compliance.

4. Determine Who Needs Access to the Information

HR frequently shares personal data with internal teams and third-party service providers. Identify **who needs access, what information they need, and under what circumstances**.

Establish how information will be shared securely and ensure third parties handle the data in accordance with data protection principles.

5. Keep Staff Informed

Under the DPA, all employees – whether new, current, temporary, or former – have the right to clear, transparent information about how their personal data is collected, processed, and stored.

Consider whether your organisation needs to issue updated employment contracts, revise HR policies, or implement new **data privacy statements**.

Employees must also understand what they can and cannot do when handling other people's personal data – whether that data belongs to a colleague, client, or customer. **Privacy policies, training,** and internal **data handling protocols** may need to be updated or introduced.

6. Prepare for Requests for Information and Data Breaches

The DPA sets specific time frames for responding to **subject access requests** and reporting **data breaches**. Your organisation must be prepared to handle such requests efficiently and in a timely manner to avoid the risk of fines, legal action, or reputational damage.

Final Note

By implementing these six steps, HR practitioners can proactively ensure that their department is DPA-compliant and safeguard both employee data and organisational integrity.

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