



Help and Advice

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 63: DATA PROTECTION

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The group was disbanded in 2014, as part of a simplification of Synod committees, and its work continues through the Trust Officer, under the oversight of the Trust's Property Subgroup. We are willing to try to provide specific advice on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or suggestions.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects of interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the website <http://urc-northernsynod.org/help-advice-bulletins>, with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

The General Data Protection Regulation 2016

There will be a new law on data protection with effect from 25 May 2018. The Information Commissioner's Office has produced guidance:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

As all churches will control the gathering, storing, processing and disclosure of data about living identifiable individuals, they will all be affected. Churches that are already complying with the Data Protection Act 1998, will find they are in a good position to adapt to the new regulation.

The new law slightly modifies the data protection principles, and gives greater rights to individuals. Data controllers will have to be clearer in their record-keeping and in the explanations they give so that people know what processing is taking place and for what purposes. Where you rely on consent to process personal data, it must be informed and explicit.

The ICO has published a checklist:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/resources-and-support/data-protection-self-assessment/getting-ready-for-the-gdpr/>

There is also a list of 12 steps to take now:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/1624219/preparing-for-the-gdpr-12-steps.pdf>

You are advised to raise awareness of the new rules, and review data processing currently taking place to see how they might affect you. Policies, procedures and privacy notices may need to be updated. You will need to be clear of the basis on which you are processing personal data (eg, informed consent, legitimate interests, contractual relations, legal obligation). It may be helpful to appoint one person to take the lead in your church on data protection matters.

The ICO has a helpline to advise small businesses and charities: **0303-123 1113 option 4**.

The Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers is running a training seminar near Durham on Thursday 8 March 2018:

<https://acat.uk.com/gdpr.html>

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