



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice

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

Bulletin 65: 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.

Data Protection

For churches still getting to grips with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018, further online guidance is available.

- Basic guidance for citizens and businesses, from the European Commission:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/data-protection/2018-reform-eu-data-protection-rules_en
- Implications for fundraising, stewardship and legacies, from the Institute of Fundraising:

<https://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/key-iof-guidance/understanding-gdpr/spotlight-series/>

Note in particular, that you need consent if you wish to send out marketing communications by email (which includes your church magazine if it includes advertisements for paid events or commercial advertisements).

- A variety of useful documents are available from the Baptist Union of Great Britain:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/304642/Data_protection_documents.aspx

The FAQ is very clear and concise, whilst guidance leaflet L13 gives more detail with practical examples.

Churches may wish issue specific privacy notices for different activities (such as adding a notice to their Gift Aid declaration forms when next updating them), or may instead provide a single comprehensive notice covering all of their processing in one place.

The EU Court of Justice has ruled in a case involving Jehovah's Witnesses in Finland, that the GDPR applies to making notes when door-knocking for evangelistic purposes. So in such cases, you need to have a legal basis for processing, and should inform people that you will be processing their personal data.

Depending on their activities, churches will often benefit from the not-for-profit exemption from having to pay an annual fee to the Information Commissioner's Office. The charity rate is £40, so if the ICO should categorise you as a large organisation, you need to inform them that you are a charity. The ICO provides a self-assessment tool:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/self-assessment/>

Initial guidance on GDPR was given in bulletin 63:

<http://urc-northernsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HA-Bulletin-63-Data-Protection-180102.pdf>

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