

Commonly Asked Questions

What does 'data protection' mean?

The term 'data protection' refers to how personal information or data is held, processed and used by organisations. It aims to prevent harm to individuals by misusing or failing to look after their personal data.

What is the legislation governing this area?

In the UK the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) sets out the current requirements for all businesses, charities and other organisations in how they hold, process and use such data. On 25 May 2018 a new EU law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), will come into force and will be applicable to *all* organisations in the UK regardless of the UK's vote to leave the EU.

The GDPR reinforces and adds to the DPA, requiring all organisations to review and improve how they collect, hold, process and use personal information. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulates the handling of data by organisations throughout the year; the Diocese submits annual returns detailing how it handles its data – these are publicly available via the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/>.

What is the Diocese of Ely doing about the change in the law?

The Diocese is required to review the personal information or data of ANYONE whose personal details are stored on the Diocesan database and/or website – these will be people who have positions and roles within parishes and deaneries such as clergy, licensed ministers, churchwardens, PCC secretaries and treasurers, etc.

We need your consent to continue to publish your contact information (e.g. within the Diocesan Directory). We are working to ensure that the information we hold on our database and in our paper files is secure and accessible only to staff who properly need it.

What is 'personal data' or 'personal information'?

The definitions of personal data in both the DPA and GDPR are lengthy and complex, but essentially it is any information which makes a living person identifiable – this includes names, addresses, names of spouses, online identifiers (such as a computer IP address) and so on. We also hold information about clergy qualifications and training records and limited financial information so that we can pay expenses to those who regularly claim them.

This is different to 'sensitive data' which includes information about ethnicity, sexuality, political and religious beliefs, health, criminal records and other, more sensitive, financial information. More can be found on the ICO website.

Where and for how long does the Diocese keep my personal information?

Information stored on our database is encrypted and securely held on password protected servers. Access is available only to specific staff who need it for operational purposes. If you have given consent for some of this information to be made public, it will be available via the 'search' function of the Diocesan website and in the directory, when published. Information will be retained for as long as required in order to perform Diocesan duties, and on occasion for the purposes of keeping a historical record.

Who at the Diocese of Ely is responsible for handling my personal data?

The staff at the Diocese who are responsible for dealing with personal information or data are:

- The Diocesan Secretary, who is the Data Protection Officer and the Data Controller under the DPA; and
- The Diocesan Data Officer, who is a Data Processor under the DPA.

The Bishop of Ely is the Data Controller for the personal information held at his office.

Can I request to see or change the information held about me by the Diocese?

Yes. You can also ask for information about how we process and share the data we hold – not just what we hold. This is described by the ICO as a “Data Subject Access Request”, the ICO website sets-out the process in making such a request and gives guidelines on any costs you can expect.

The Diocese is committed to following best practice as to the processing of personal data.

You can request to have your details changed if they are incorrect or out of date, and you can ask for them to be deleted (subject to certain requirements) when you leave office.

Will parishes have to review the data they hold about people in order to comply with GDPR?

Yes, you will. The GDPR affects ALL organisations, including PCCs and charities, even if they are not registered with the Charity Commission. This will most notably affect parish records of parishioners on the electoral roll and for events and fundraising.

Further guidance for parishes, provided by the central Church of England team, can be found on the Parish Resources website at <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/gdpr/>.

The ICO website (<https://ico.org.uk/>) also contains advice on how you can best prepare for GDPR.

Remember, it remains each parish’s responsibility to ensure it complies with the data protection regulations.