



THE OFFICE OF THE

**Data Protection  
Authority***Excellence through ethics*

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### [Message from the Commissioner](#)

I talked [last time](#) about some of the things we have done throughout 2022.

As we look ahead to 2023, I want to start by referencing a statement I heard recently by author, innovator and campaigner [Dr Louis Rosenberg](#) - “If we’ve learned anything about technology over the last few decades, it’s that we don’t prepare for the downsides until the problems are so egregious, we can’t ignore them.”



This is not just true in the context of technology, it is true in many different areas of our lives. I recently heard a powerful interview with a local councillor in the UK talking about a young boy who tragically died because of mould in his family’s home. In welcoming the changes now being put into place to prevent anything like that happening again, he also despaired at the fact that it had taken something so awful to prompt change. It is almost as though we don’t quite believe that any real harm is going to occur, whether it’s technology or housing or anything else, until it actually happens.

Then we say – ah, ok, I see it now. Is it such a crazy suggestion that we try not to wait until harms are real? So, when we look ahead to 2023, we do so based on the experiences we have gained and things we have learned – embracing the upsides and preparing for the downsides.

The beginning of 2023 will see us launch our [new strategic plan](#). When the previous one was published, we had only just created our office. In the four years since, we were tasked with building a regulatory authority capable of fulfilling the myriad of duties set out in the data protection legislation. Our new strategic plan is built on the same pillars and with the same values, but it has been updated to reflect both our practical experience of regulating the law, as well as feedback from the public and stakeholders. And we continue to be supported by an experienced board, chaired by Richard Thomas CBE.

The new year starts amid a challenging economic backdrop. This, in turn, is likely to put a strain on already pressured governance and data protection teams and highlights the importance of the work we want to continue to do in supporting our community, especially small businesses and the charity sector through [guidance, outreach and drop-ins](#).

As a regulator we need to be ready to respond to queries and complaints from those who feel that their data has been mishandled by others in the Bailiwick. The small team of officers responsible for

this area are exemplars of their profession, acting with integrity, impartiality and humanity. There is always so much to be learned from dealing with complaints and we want to ensure those lessons feed into our communications strategy.

So, in looking forward, we also need to look back. Doing so means that we are clear about the opportunities as well as the risks posed to us all in this data-driven environment. One of the PR problems that data protection has been saddled with is the sense that it is opposed to anything technologically new or innovative. I resist that with every cell in my body!

Data protection is, at its heart, about treating people with respect and dignity. Our personal data (facts or opinions about us) is us and what happens to it really does matter.

Inevitably the compliance work needed to build in protections can feel burdensome. The point is not to avoid those conversations, but rather to shift them to encourage us to see the effort as worthwhile.

There are lots of things that we commit time to – whether it's taking an exam, learning a language, playing a musical instrument. If we see that activity as having value or producing something of value, we are less likely to balk at the time, money or energy required. Laws are rarely perfect, but in a world where so many do not have the good fortune of similar protections, let's not wring our hands at the imperfections, let's be grateful for and celebrate that we have these rights at all.

In looking ahead, let's do so knowing that if we all engage more proactively, we can make a difference. The technology of the future is being built now. We owe it to ourselves and the next generation to ensure its foundations are built on something other than exploitation and profit. Let's try and buck the trend.

Emma Martins  
Data Protection Commissioner



We will be taking a break from lunchtime on Friday 23rd December, and resuming work on Tuesday 3 January.

[enquiries@odpa.gg](mailto:enquiries@odpa.gg) will be monitored throughout this break period.

**Merry Christmas one and all**

**[REMINDER: registration window open from 1 January - 28 February](#)**

If you are established in the Bailiwick and work with personal data (information/facts/opinions

about people), it will shortly be time to renew your annual registration with us. You can complete this process at any point whilst the registration window is open (from the beginning of January till the end of February), please visit [odpa.gg/registration](https://odpa.gg/registration) for more information.



**REGISTRATION WINDOW:  
open from 1 Jan - 28 Feb**

If the data has a human at the heart,  
registering is just the start.  
[odpa.gg/registration](https://odpa.gg/registration)



### **[Beyond our shores](#)**

We have launched a new feature on our website, '[Beyond our shores](#)', a monthly round-up of data-related developments from around the world.

### **[Free support and advice, and public engagement](#)**

We know the data protection landscape can seem difficult to navigate sometimes, and we are here to help. We regularly publish guidance and resources to support all organisations in their own approach to compliance with our local data protection law. You can access our broad range of online resources and guidance via the links below:

#### **Support and Advice:**

- [Fortnightly drop-ins](#)
- [Study Visits](#)
- [Events](#) (view [recordings of past events here](#))
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Information Hub](#)
- [Beginner's Area](#) (includes '[The Feel-Good Guide to Data Protection](#)')
- Bi-monthly [breach statistics](#)
- [Newsletters](#)

#### **Public engagement:**

- [Children and young people](#)
- [Project Bijou](#)

*[Suggested reading: The Metaverse – and How it Will Revolutionize Everything by Matthew Ball](#)*



[Read our Commissioner's latest book review](#) and discover her other recommended reads of 2022.



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