

What is personal data?

Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable person who could be identified, directly or indirectly based on the information.

The EU-wide rules in the [Data Protection Act 2018 \(GDPR\)](#) provides the legal definition of what counts as personal data in the UK.

Personal data includes an identifier like:

- your name
- an identification number, for example your National Insurance or passport number
- your location data, for example your home address or mobile phone GPS data
- an online identifier, for example your IP or email address.

Sensitive personal data is also covered in GDPR as special categories of personal data. The special categories specifically include:

- genetic data relating to the inherited or acquired genetic characteristics which give unique information about a person's physiology or the health of that natural person
- biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, including facial images and fingerprints
- data concerning health which reveals information about your health status, including both physical and mental health and the provision of health care services
- racial or ethnic origin
- political opinions
- religious or philosophical beliefs
- trade union membership
- sex life or sexual orientation.

Under existing and new data protection rules anyone who processes personal information must make sure that the information is (amongst other things):

- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- processed fairly and lawfully
- obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and not further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes
- accurate and up to date
- processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Data Protection Act 2018
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- secure (for example using appropriate technical or organisational measures to protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data).