

GDPR: Some definitions

Term	Quick definition	Formal definition from the General Data Protection Regulation and/or further explanation
Adequate data protection laws	Countries/territories outside the EEA that have been deemed to have adequate data protection legislation by the European Commission	The following countries have been deemed to have adequate data protection legislation by the European Commission: Andorra, Argentina, Canada (commercial businesses only), Faroe Islands, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Israel, Jersey, New Zealand, Switzerland, United States (Privacy Shield only), Uruguay.
Anonymisation	Rendering the personal data anonymous in such a way that you could never trace the data back to the living individual they relate to	Recital 26: personal data rendered anonymous in such a manner that the data subject is not or no longer identifiable. ICO guidance: anonymisation is the process of turning data into a form which does not identify individuals and where identification is not likely to take place.
Biometric data	Personal data obtained by a technical process that allows an individual to be identified, such as facial recognition or fingerprinting	Article 4(14): 'biometric data' means personal data resulting from specific technical processing relating to the physical, physiological or behavioural characteristics of a natural person, which allow or confirm the unique identification of that natural person, such as facial images or dactyloscopic data.
Consent	Freely given, specific and informed indication of the data subject's wishes with regard to the personal data processing	Article 4(11): 'consent' of the data subject means any freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the data subject's wishes by which he or she, by a statement or by a clear affirmative action, signifies agreement to the processing of personal data relating to him or her.
Controller	The organisation (or person) which decides the purposes for which personal data are processed	Article 4(7): 'controller' means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data.
Data concerning health	Personal data about the physical or mental health or condition of a person	Article 4(15): 'data concerning health' means personal data related to the physical or mental health of a natural person, including the provision of health care services, which reveal information about his or her health status.
Data subject	The identified or identifiable living individual who is the subject of the personal data	Article 4(1): 'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment, i.e. an assessment of the impact of the proposed personal data processing on the rights and freedoms of the data subject	Article 35: Where a type of processing in particular using new technologies, and taking into account the nature, scope, context and purposes of the processing, is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons, the controller shall, prior to the processing, carry out an assessment of the impact of the envisaged processing operations on the protection of personal data.
EEA	European Economic Area	There are no restrictions on data transfers to EEA countries. These are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.
EU	European Union	
Filing system	A structured set of records containing personal data, including manual or paper files	Article 4(6): 'filing system' means any structured set of personal data which are accessible according to specific criteria, whether centralised, decentralised or dispersed on a functional or geographical basis.
Genetic data	Personal data which give unique information about the physiology or the health of a person obtained from the analysis of a biological sample	Article 4(13): 'genetic data' means personal data relating to the inherited or acquired genetic characteristics of a natural person which give unique information about the physiology or the health of that natural person and which result, in particular, from an analysis of a biological sample from the natural person in question.
Human tissue	Material which has come from a human body	Human Tissue Authority (Human Tissue Act 2004): material that has come from a human body and consists of, or includes, human cells.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office (the UK regulator for the GDPR and related UK legislation)	
Personal data	Information relating to an identified or identifiable living person	Article 4(1): 'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.
Personal data breach	A security incident involving personal data which have or could have been wrongly disclosed, lost or altered	Article 4(12): 'personal data breach' means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.
PIA	Privacy Impact Assessment (see DPIA)	
Processing	Doing anything with personal data (e.g. recording, storing, sharing, deleting), whether electronically or otherwise	Article 4(2): 'processing' means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction.
Processor	An organisation (or person) that processes personal data on behalf of the controller	Article 4(8): 'processor' means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller.
Profiling	Automated processing of personal data which allows the controller to predict the behaviour, preferences or location of a data subject	Article 4(4): 'profiling' means any form of automated processing of personal data consisting of the use of personal data to evaluate certain personal aspects relating to a natural person, in particular to analyse or predict aspects concerning that natural person's performance at work, economic situation, health, personal preferences, interests, reliability, behaviour, location or movements.
Pseudonymisation	Rendering the personal data anonymous but retaining a 'key' separately and securely to enable the re-identification of the data subjects	Article 4(5): 'pseudonymisation' means the processing of personal data in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information, provided that such additional information is kept separately and is subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person.
Recipient	The organisation (or person) to which personal data are disclosed	Article 4(9): 'recipient' means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or another body, to which the personal data are disclosed, whether a third party or not.
Restriction of processing	Temporarily halting processing (e.g. not disclosing) while personal data are verified or corrected	Article 4(3): 'restriction of processing' means the marking of stored personal data with the aim of limiting their processing in the future.
Sensitive personal data	See Special category personal data	
Special category personal data	Personal data which is more sensitive in nature	Article 9: personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, [...] genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation. Personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences are not technically special category personal data under the GDPR but such data are afforded a similarly sensitive status under both the GDPR and related UK legislation.
Third party	An organisation (or person) other than the data subject, controller or processor	Article 4(10): 'third party' means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or body other than the data subject, controller, processor and persons who, under the direct authority of the controller or processor, are authorised to process personal data.