

A Parliament Street Policy Paper

GDPR:

The Impact on Government



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Overview

On May 25th, 2018, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be legally enforceable. The legislation is designed to protect and empower all EU citizens through strengthening data privacy and security laws.

Organisations which fail to adhere its strict guidelines will face significant fines, potentially costing millions of pounds.

The implementation of the GDPR within central government is an ongoing and increasingly complex process. With departments of varying sizes, managing and sharing large volumes of public data and private information requires careful consideration.

Analyst house Gartner estimates that around 60% of organisations are likely to miss the GDPR compliance deadline. Most organisations cite a lack of budget and not enough staff knowledge to implement changes.

This report is designed to examine how central government departments are preparing to implement the GDPR, what steps are being taken and provide insight into the resources used.

Methodology

The Parliament Street research team issued Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all the major UK government departments asking for a breakdown of expenditure on GDPR preparation to date and projected spend for the remainder of the calendar year.

We also asked for detail on how the money was being spent, for example on staff training, software and external services.

The only departments to respond to the request with detail on GDPR were: The Treasury, The Department for Transport, The Ministry of Justice and The Department for Work and Pensions.



Key findings

Our researchers discovered significant variations in spending between departments and respective agencies. The Department for Work and Pensions told us that its forecast indicated a total spend of £14.73million to the end of the calendar year 2018 on a range of activities to support the GDPR.

These include a programme of education and awareness activity for all staff, system remediation and a review of the existing records storage arrangements.

The Treasury told us it had spent £90,483 in the financial year of 2017-2018 and projected £78,800 in 2018-2019. It had also allocated £30,000 on learning and development and £15,000 on E-Discovery tools.

The Department for Transport's spending figures requires context as it has a more complex structure, of several agencies.

It consists of a central Department and four Executive Agencies: the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA). The Department, including the Executive Agencies, counts as a single Data Controller for GDPR purposes. GDPR preparation activities are being taken forward by project teams in the central Department and each agency.

In its official response the Department for Transport told us that it had spent £147,000 to date preparing for the regulation. This figure includes some time from internal staff assisting with the preparation for the department.

Of this figure, £23,000 was spent on staff training and £72,000 on hiring contingent labour. The remaining amount was costs associated with existing, internal, staff who have been working on GDPR preparation, where those costs have been recorded. The department said that for the rest of the year it estimated a further spend on GDPR of £400,000.

The Ministry of Justice told us it has spent £154,218 to date on GDPR preparations. This included £145,430 on software and £8,788 on GDPR-specific training for staff. For the rest of the calendar year, the department plans to spend a further £24,182 on GDPR training and £364,911 on software.

The Department for Work and Pensions
£14.73million

HM Treasury
£200,783

The Department for Transport
£547,000

The Ministry of Justice
£543,311

Recommendations

The research findings are only a snapshot of the work the government is undertaking to ensure it is fully GDPR compliant. Based upon the findings, our research team suggest the following to improve the overall approach to this legislation.

- **Increase GDPR staff training** – This regulation will impact nearly every single member of staff, so it makes sense for every team member to be given a foundation course training in the subject and its implications. Doing this will increase staff awareness, accountability and GDPR operational capabilities.
- **Develop a GDPR hub for central government and respective agencies** – Creation of an online portal for the sharing of resources and the strategies between departments. This facility could also be used to negotiate discounted services e.g. legal advice and software licenses. Webinars for department heads would also be beneficial for sharing best practice implementation policies.
- **Put more GDPR work out to tender** – Managing the GDPR across government requires a broad array of skills. Whether it's technical capabilities or legal skills, it is likely that the process can be improved through collaboration with private companies and specialist organisations. Too much of this work is managed 'in-house' and external organisations should be given the opportunity to contribute to the process.