

Paying the data protection fee

Important information for town, parish or community councils

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). Its work providing advice and support for organisations and the public is funded by the data protection fee.

As a town, parish or community council, the law says if you are processing personal data you must pay a data protection fee to the ICO, unless you are exempt. The easiest way to establish whether you need to pay or if you are exempt is by working through our online self-assessment tool: ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/self-assessment/.

Failure to pay the fee could result in a fine of up £4,000.

How much do I have to pay?

The cost of your data protection fee depends on the size of your organisation and its turnover. For most local councils it will be £40 or £60, which will be reduced by £5 a year if you pay by direct debit. Check how much you have to pay: ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee.

How do I pay the fee?

The quickest way to do this is online at ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee – it takes about 15 minutes. However if you need any help with this you can call the ICO on 0303 123 1113.

What if I have already paid?

If you have already paid your data protection fee or registered with the ICO you do not need to do anything until your registration expires. You can check this here: ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/register-of-fee-payers. The ICO will send you a reminder six weeks before your registration expires, so it is important to make sure that your contact details are up to date.

Do individual councillors also need to pay the data protection fee?

On 1 April 2019, individual elected representatives and prospective representatives were exempted from paying the data protection fee.

'Elected representatives' is defined by the DPA 2018 and includes, but is not limited to, MPs, MSPs, AMs in Wales, MEPs, elected councillors in county councils, district councils, London boroughs, parish councils, elected mayors and police and crime commissioners.

However, if they process personal data for purposes outside their role as an elected, or prospective representative then the data protection fee may apply. For example, if they have their own business that processes personal data, or if they use CCTV for business or crime prevention purposes in connection with that business, they may still have to pay the fee.

But even if all individual representatives of a council are exempt from paying the fee, it is still likely that the council itself will need to pay.

How do I find out more?

We will be publishing further GDPR compliance tools and resources for the local council sector over the coming months.

For more information visit our data protection fee pages at ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/ or call our helpline 0303 123 1113.