

News story: UK outlines proposals for shared approach on data protection

The Government has set out its plans for arrangements that could ensure personal data would continue to move back and forth between the UK and the EU in the future in a safe, properly regulated way.

In the latest of a series of papers looking at the UK's future partnership with the EU after we have left, the Government will consider the case for a unique approach that could allow data to continue to be exchanged to ensure ongoing competitiveness, innovation and job creation.

The document outlines how the UK is considering an ambitious model for the protection and exchange of personal data with the EU that reflects the unprecedented alignment between British and European law and recognises the high data protection standards that will be in place at the point of exit.

This would allow us to work more closely with the EU, providing continuity and certainty for business, allowing public authorities, including law enforcement authorities, to continue their close co-operation, protecting people's data and privacy and providing for ongoing regulatory co-operation between the UK and EU data protection authorities.

These proposals will provide a stable base for the Government to deliver its commitment to turn Britain into the best and safest place to be online.

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock, said:

In the modern world, data flows increasingly underpin trade, business and all relationships. We want the secure flow of data to be unhindered in the future as we leave the EU.

So a strong future data relationship between the UK and EU, based on aligned data protection rules, is in our mutual interest.

The UK is leading the way on modern data protection laws and we have worked closely with our EU partners to develop world leading data protection standards.

The paper published today sets out how we think our data relationship should continue. Our goal is to combine strong privacy rules with a relationship that allows flexibility, to give consumers and businesses certainty in their use of data.

The digital economy is important to the UK's economy. In 2015 it was worth £118.4 billion, or 7.1 per cent of UK's total GVA. This relies on data being able to flow freely back and forth. Any disruption to these cross-border data flows could be costly to both Britain and the EU.

As the UK and the EU build a new, deep and special partnership it is essential that we agree a UK-EU model for exchanging and protecting personal data that:

- allows data to continue to be exchanged in a safe and properly regulated way
- offers sufficient stability and confidence for businesses, public authorities and individuals
- provides for ongoing regulatory cooperation between the EU and the UK on current and future data protection issues, building on the positive opportunity of a partnership between global leaders on data protection
- continues to protect the privacy of individuals
- respects UK sovereignty, including the UK's ability to protect the security of its citizens and its ability to maintain and develop its position as a leader in data protection
- does not impose unnecessary additional costs to business
- is based on objective consideration of evidence.

We look forward to the EU outlining its own proposals in this area and taking forward discussions in future negotiations.