

# Key principles of GDPR

**John Fitzpatrick**, information security officer at Next Generation IT (NGIT), looks at what you need to consider when reviewing your business for its GDPR readiness

OVER the last year or so, GDPR has become a hot topic in the business community. No doubt you will have been invited to many seminars. So things must be very clear, or maybe not? We all know how important it is to protect our customers' data, but do we know what it is we actually have to do when applying GDPR best practice to our current business operation? If not, then don't panic, it's not too late. If you are looking for a brief description of the key principles of GDPR and what you need to consider when reviewing your business for its GDPR readiness, then here might be a good start.

**Principle 1:** Lawful, fair and transparent processing – this simply states that you need to tell your customers what you intend to do with their data. What does this mean? Well it is different for each business, but if you collect data on a form, then be clear on why you need to collect this information. Review your contracts, T&C's and privacy statements and be clear, concise and jargon free in your explanation.

**Principle 2:** Purpose – data can only be used for the purpose it was originally collected for and consented to. If you are going to use data for multiple reasons, then make this clear when tackling principle 1. If your use of data is changing, then you need to contact your customers and gain their consent.



**Principle 3:** Minimisation – only collect the data you need. The positive is, the less data to manage, the more control you have.

**Principle 4:** Accurate and up to date – GDPR states that data must be accurate. In practical terms this means the data you input should be verified. If customers can self-rectify their data, it may save you a lot of hassle.

**Principle 5:** Retention – only keep the data as long as it is required. This is where you

think there may be conflict with other forms of regulation, but GDPR doesn't work like that. If you need to keep data due to compliance with another law, then you need to keep the data. Be clear when dealing with principle 1 on what your data retention requirements are.

**Principle 6:** Security – make sure the control and investment in data security, confidentiality and integrity are proportionate. Storing your data on up-to-date platforms and making sure access is limited to only those who require it,

is core to staying out of trouble. If you use systems that are trusted and supported, you are at least halfway there.

If GDPR is still vague to you, spend some time familiarising yourself with the six core principles. Apply this knowledge to what your business does now. It probably isn't a million miles away from what you already do, so with a bit more understanding your GDPR journey could be shorter than you think.

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