

Data Protection Self-Assessment toolkit – comments from pilot testing

On Thursday 28 January 2016, the ICO launched a self-assessment tool ico.org.uk/dptk that will help small and medium sized organisations (SME's) to assess their compliance with the Data Protection Act.

A number of SME's from several different sectors tested the toolkit in September. Feedback was very positive and can be read here:

1) Andrew Webber from Exeter Orthodontic Practice, said:

"As an SME dentistry business which holds and uses sensitive medical data; it is imperative that we not only comply with data protection regulations, but also strive to improve our information handling procedures. The toolkit allows us to review and identify any data protection gaps and confirm that the processes we have are sound. Our core business is providing a service to patients and part of this is safely handling their data. If patients are not confident about our professionalism they will not use our services."

2) Peter Black from consultancy Newton Europe Limited, said:

"The tool was very simple to use but provided a wealth of information. This is a great tool for a beginner or an experienced information practitioner. The toolkit has highlighted weak spots with our information security that we will now work on."

3) Andy Wood from marketing services provider GI Solutions Group, said:

"It was excellent - well thought out and planned. It will help me train other group members who are tasked to help with data protection. I recommend any and all companies to use this tool. It is helpful and invaluable with your training needs."

4) Michael Wilson from Ramsdens Financial Limited, said:

"I would use this as an annual review tool and to also assist in staff training and awareness. This tool could prove invaluable to financial service businesses as a method of ensuring all of our FCA regulatory boxes are ticked while giving us comfort in knowing that content and methodology is backed by the ICO."

5) Louise Makin from BBS Law Limited, said:

"I found it very user friendly and it covered all the areas that are relevant. For me as a compliance manager I can use this to make sure that all the policies and procedures are put in place and get 'buy in' from the partners to promote them to all staff."

6) June Cairns-Smith from Guild of St. Mary and St. Anne charity, said:

"I think is an excellent tool. We are currently producing policies and guidance and the toolkit is really useful in assisting us in producing a GAP analysis and subsequent action plan on what needs to be addressed, with hints and tips as to where to go for additional guidance".

7) Claire Mallia from Lincoln Gardens Primary School, said:

"The toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of our data protection processes and controls - highlighting areas for development. We always look to the ICO as a valuable source of information and guidance to ensure we take all reasonable steps to fulfil our responsibilities. This will be particularly important when the reforms to data protection laws are implemented."

8) Lana Roy from the Conservation Volunteers, said:

"This is a great way to make sure we are constantly evaluating our policies, procedures and training. It will help us to make sure we have everything in place for compliance."

9) Stephen Halpin from FOUR security Consultants Ltd, said:

"We would use this toolkit to develop the maturity of approach to understanding DPA considerations, improving sustainability and identifying strengths and weaknesses. By providing consistency to clients and generally professionalising the approach, we feel this improves commercial opportunities for companies which follow this process as it drives out clearly defined security scopes that are proportionate, necessary and commensurate to risk."

10) Dr Simon Burnham from Solent Psychology LLP, said:

"We really appreciated the fact that the design of the toolkit made the process of auditing our professional practice an opportunity to develop our practice at the same time."