

Government foreshadows significant savings for public bodies as part of data protection overhaul

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The Government's agenda for the next Parliamentary session as set out in the King's speech of 7 November 2023 included much-anticipated changes to the UK's data protection regime that will be brought about by the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill (Bill).

The Bill will amend the UK's retained version of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (the UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. It aims to streamline the efficiency of data processing by public authorities through the cutting of administration and red tape. The Bill is estimated to "unlock" £2.5bn for the public sector over the course of 10 years and this is expected to come from an increase in productivity and savings to compliance costs and law enforcement/intelligence bodies.

In the context of law enforcement, approximately 1.5 million hours could be saved by removing the requirement to record a justification every time personal data is accessed or disclosed. The total cost savings for law enforcement could be in the region of £46.5m per year.

Public authorities and organisations with existing and well established risk assessments can streamline their data protection risk assessments through alignment with existing processes. Essentially, reducing the time and effort necessary to focus on data protection in order to increase the time and effort available for productivity.

Overall, the benefit to public authorities all seem to come by way of a reduction in effort input and what can be viewed as a 'watered-down' approach to [data protection](#). Savings to law enforcement come as a result of unregulated access to individuals' data without an obligation to record the same. Savings to compliance costs and an increase in productivity can simply be viewed as consequences of the reduction in activities to 'comply' with in the first place.

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