

8.2.1 Data Protection

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

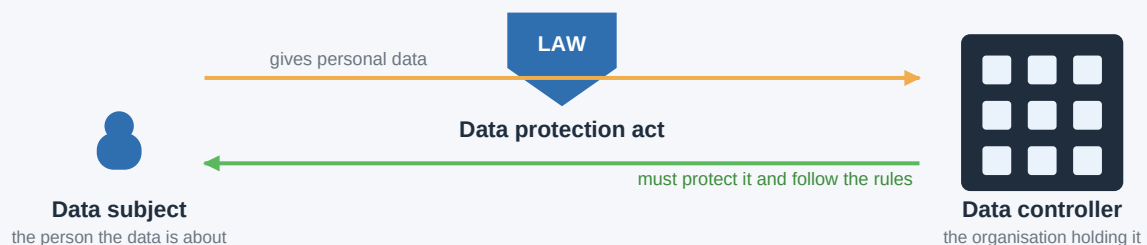
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The principles of a typical data protection act and why data protection legislation is required
- Characteristics of personal and sensitive data
- The need for personal data to be kept confidential and protected to avoid inappropriate disclosure

Data protection legislation

A **data protection act** is a law that controls how organisations collect, store and use personal data. It is needed because organisations hold huge amounts of personal data and it can be misused, lost, stolen or shared without permission. The law protects people's privacy and gives them rights over their data.

Figure 30: How a data protection act works



Principles of a typical data protection act

Principle	Meaning
Fair and lawful	Data must be collected and used fairly and legally, usually with the person's consent.
Specific purpose	Data may only be used for the purpose it was collected for.
Adequate and relevant	Only the data that is needed should be collected, not more.
Accurate and up to date	Data must be correct and kept up to date, and errors put right.
Not kept longer than needed	Data must be deleted when it is no longer required.
Individual's rights	People can see the data held about them, and have it corrected.
Secure	Data must be protected from unauthorised access, loss and damage.
Not sent abroad unprotected	Data may only be transferred to countries with adequate protection.

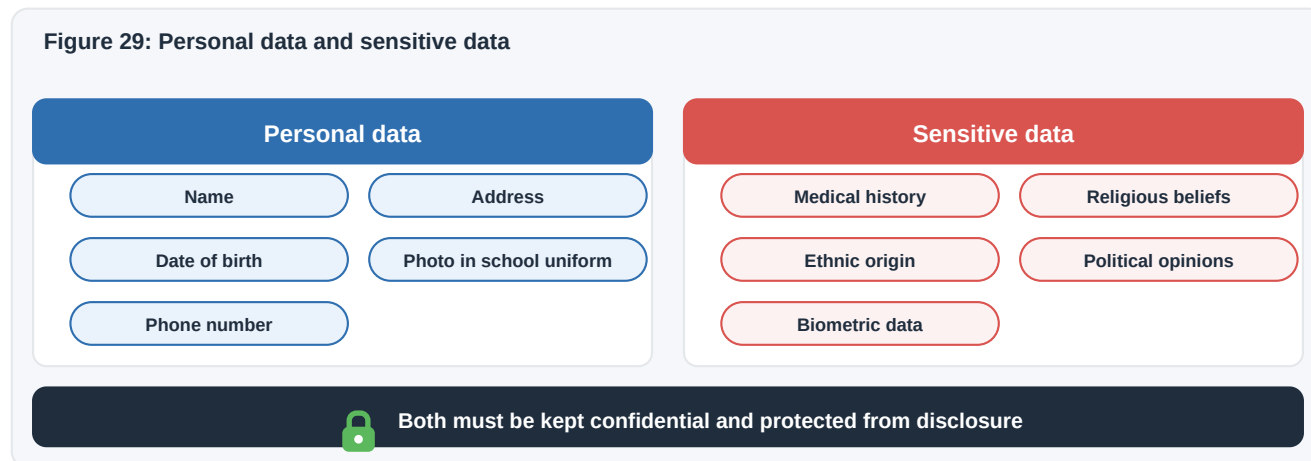
Why legislation is required

- To protect people from **misuse** of their data, such as identity theft and fraud
- To protect **privacy** and give people control over their own information
- To make organisations **responsible** and open to penalties if they break the rules
- To build **trust** so that people are willing to give their data and use online services

Personal and sensitive data

Personal data is information that identifies a living person. **Sensitive data** is private information that could cause harm, embarrassment or unfair treatment if it were disclosed, so it needs extra protection.

Figure 29: Personal data and sensitive data



- **Why it must be kept confidential:** disclosure can lead to identity theft, fraud, bullying, stalking, discrimination or embarrassment
- **How it is protected:** passwords and access levels so only authorised people can see it, encryption, secure storage, privacy settings, not sharing it online, and collecting only what is needed
- **Inappropriate disclosure** means personal data reaching people who should not see it, such as a school sharing a learner's medical history or photograph with the public

EXAM TIP

A photograph of a learner **in school uniform** is personal data because it can show who they are and where they go to school. Always say **why** data must be kept confidential: to prevent harm to the person.

Key terms

Term	Meaning
Data protection act	A law controlling how personal data is collected and used.
Personal data	Information that identifies a living person.
Sensitive data	Private data that could cause harm if disclosed.
Data subject	The person the data is about.
Data controller	The organisation that holds and uses the data.
Consent	Permission given for data to be collected or used.
Confidential	Kept secret from unauthorised people.
Disclosure	Making data known to others.

Practice questions

Answer each question in full sentences. Command words used: State (give a short answer), Describe (say what it is like), Explain (give reasons), Analyse (break it down and examine it), Suggest (apply your knowledge to a situation), Compare and contrast (similarities and differences), Evaluate (weigh up and reach a judgement).

No.	Question	Marks
1	State two examples of personal data.	[2]
2	Explain why data protection legislation is needed.	[3]
3	Describe two principles of a typical data protection act.	[4]
4	Evaluate the importance of keeping the sensitive data of learners confidential.	[5]

Total: 14 marks