



**HSE Data Protection - Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives
(TD's, Senators, MEP's & Local Representatives)**

Policy Procedure Protocol Guideline Clinical Guideline

DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE

Document Owner (post holder title): Assistant National Director – Parliamentary Affairs Division

Document Owner name: Ray Mitchell

Document Owner email contact: pad@hse.ie
(Generic email addresses only for the NCR)

Document Commissioner(s): (Name and post holder title): Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director – Parliamentary Affairs Division

Document Approver(s): (Name and post holder title): Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director – Parliamentary Affairs Division?

Lead responsibility for national implementation: Ray Mitchell

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Development Group Name: NONE

Development Group Chairperson: NONE

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Note: Original document is Version 0. First revision is Version 1. Second revision is Version 2, and so on.

Note: HSE National 3PGs should be formally reviewed every 3 years, unless new legislative/regulatory or emerging issues/research/technology/audit etc. dictates sooner.

VERSION CONTROL UPDATE			
Version No.	Date reviewed	Section numbers changed	Approved by
XXX001	April 2013		Mr. Paul Connors, National Director Communications
XXX002	Dec. 2018		Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director – Parliamentary Affairs Division
XXX003	Dec. 2023	Title amended	Mr. Ray Mitchell, Assistant National Director – Parliamentary Affairs Division
		<i>(Insert additional lines as required)</i>	
Document management notes: Version 3 Title updated to <i>HSE Data Protection - Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives (TD's, Senators, MEP's & Local Representatives)</i> <i>Example: If title of the HSE national document has been changed since the last version</i>			

PUBLICATION INFORMATION
Title: HSE Data Protection - Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives (TD's, Senators, MEP's and Local Representatives)
Topic: Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives
National Group: Parliamentary Affairs Division
Short summary: This SOP is to ensure that we understand the Data Protection Commission (DPC) guidance documents, handle sensitive personal data carefully and at the same time provide an efficient and effective service to Oireachtas members as required under the Health Act 2004.

Description:

The Data Protection Commission issued guidance documents in 2018 for elected representatives which sets out how data controllers including public organisations should deal with elected public representatives with regard to the disclosure of information to representations and parliamentary questions in the context of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. In this regard the DPC guidance document entitled ***Guidelines on the processing¹ of personal data² by Elected Representatives³ under section 40 of the data protection act 2018 (the DPA 2018)***, is the document that is relevant to public bodies, *particularly pages 11-18* should be carefully read and considered alongside this SOP.

A copy of the DPC advice document is circulated with this SOP and it can also be downloaded from the Commission website at:-

www.dataprotection.ie/en/guidance-landing/elected-representatives-general-data-protection-regulation-and-data-protection-act

¹ See Article 4(2) of the GDPR

² See Article 4(1) of the GDPR

³ These Guidelines are for the benefit of elected representatives as defined by section 40(5) of the DPA Act 2018 and for those organisations engaged by elected representatives.

The above three footnotes are attached to the DPC guidance document on the front page.

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PART A:

Title: HSE Data Protection – Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives (TD's, Senators, MEP's & Local Representatives)

Outline of PPPG steps/recommendations:

SOP developed by the PAD office.

PART B:

1.0 Purpose and Scope

1.1. Purpose

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) has issued new guidance documents for elected representatives which sets out how data controllers including public organisations should deal with elected public representatives with regard to the disclosure of information to representations and parliamentary questions in the context of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. In this regard the DPC guidance document entitled ***Guidelines on the processing⁴ of personal data⁵ by Elected Representatives⁶ under section 40 of the data protection act 2018 (the DPA 2018)***, is the document that is relevant to public bodies, *particularly pages 11-18* should be carefully read and considered alongside this SOP.

A copy of the DPC advice document is circulated with this SOP and it can also be downloaded from the Commission website at:-

www.dataprotection.ie/en/guidance-landing/elected-representatives-general-data-protection-regulation-and-data-protection-act

1.2. Scope

This SOP is to ensure that we understand the DPC guidance documents, handle sensitive personal data carefully and at the same time provide an efficient and effective service to Oireachtas members as required under the Health Act 2004.

2.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

2.1. Article 9(1) of GDPR

Article 9 (1) of the GDPR sets out the Special categories of personal data which include:

- Race
- Ethnic origin
- Political opinion
- Religious or philosophical beliefs

⁴ See Article 4(2) of the GDPR

⁵ See Article 4(1) of the GDPR

⁶ These Guidelines are for the benefit of elected representatives as defined by section 40(5) of the DPA Act 2018 and for those organisations engaged by elected representatives.

- Trade union membership
- Genetic data
- Biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person
- Data concerning health
- Data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation.

If a request for the above category of data were requested by an elected representative specific safeguards would have to be in place. If a request is ever made for this special category of personal data **please in the first instance discuss it with your line manager and / or contact the PAD office for advice.**

2.2. Data Controller

'controller' means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data; where the purposes and means of such processing are determined by Union or Member State law, the controller or the specific criteria for its nomination may be provided for by Union or Member State law (Article 4(7) of the GDPR).

3.0 Responsibilities and Procedures

In order to further assist the HSE organisation, the following updated standard operating procedure should be used when dealing with public representatives (local, national and European) and their representations and in the case of Oireachtas members, their parliamentary questions.

3.1. Where the HSE receives parliamentary questions or a representation from a public representative

Where the HSE receives parliamentary questions or a representation from a public representative which requests information on behalf of a constituent and this information is of a routine nature such as when Mrs. X will get her medical card or where on the waiting list is Mrs. X or what disability services Mr. Y is entitled to etc., these should be answered in line with the DPC guidance document *Guidelines⁷ of personal data⁸ by Elected Representatives⁹ under section 40 of the data protection act 2018 (the DPA 2018).*

⁷ See Article 4(2) of the GDPR

⁸ See Article 4(1) of the GDPR

⁹ These Guidelines are for the benefit of elected representatives as defined by section 40(5) of the DPA Act 2018 and for those organisations engaged by elected representatives.

On page 11 of this guidance document it states as follows:

The DPC advises that where a public representative makes a written representation on behalf of a constituent on foot of Section 40, the organisation can generally assume that the constituent has given their permission for the release of personal data necessary to respond to the representation. In other words the organisation may accept the bona fides of elected representatives who state they are acting on behalf of a member of the public. As the organisation is accountable for the personal data it has chosen to release, it should be satisfied that it is reasonable to assume that the individual whose personal data is released would have no objection to such a release through a public representative.

3.2. If unclear whether to release information requested

Where a HSE Data Controller is not clear as to whether the information being requested by the public representative is of a more sensitive personal nature or comes under the special categories of data as per the GDPR and is not sure as to whether to release the information to the public representative, the data controller should in the first instance check with their Line Manager to clarify the matter and then proceed as guided. If further advice is needed it should be sought from the PAD office. Following that, the advice of the HSE's Data Protection Officer can be sought.

3.3. If PQ or Representation is on behalf of a constituent

When the HSE receives a parliamentary question or a representation from a public representative on behalf of a constituent and the information requested *is determined to be of a sensitive personal nature or comes under the special categories of data as per the GDPR* (e.g. *What procedure did Mrs X have, what illness does she have, how much is Mr Y receiving, what race is Mr X, what is Ms W's sexual orientation*) the Data Controller should where feasible check with the patient or client that he/she has given consent for the information to be released to the public representative. If the client or patient cannot be contacted the Data Controller in agreement with the Line Manager should contact the public representative's office to check if the public representative has consent from the patient or client to obtain the requested sensitive personal data. The details should be noted on the file, inter alia, including the date on which the contact was made, by whom and the name of the person confirming the information. When this procedure is used it needs to be handled in a sensitive manner.

3.4. Further assistance

Where after consulting local management, there is still doubt with regard to the sensitive nature of the data being requested in the Parliamentary Question or Representation the Data Controller should contact the Parliamentary Affairs Division (PAD) on (01) 635 2505 or pad@hse.ie for advice and assistance. Where necessary the HSE'S Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dpo@hse.ie.

4.0 Revision / Update

4.1. Frequency of Review

To be updated as required.

4.2. Method used to review operation of Standard Operating Procedure

Performance Indicator data collected on a routine basis to demonstrate level of performance etc.

5.0 References

GDPR (EU) 2016/679 (Implementation date: 25th of May 2018)

Data Protection Act 2018

Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 (**)

*(** as retained/amended by sections 7 and 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018)*

6.0 Appendices

Appendix I: Membership of the PPPG Development Group

Appendix II: Membership of Approval Governance Group

Appendix III: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

Appendix I: Membership of the PPPG Development Group

Please list all members involved in the development of the document. Identify chairperson/co-chair of the Development Group.

Membership of [name of Development Group]	
Name	Role and position
The SOP was developed in house by the PAD office	Ray Mitchell and team PAD office.


Appendix II: Membership of the Approval Governance Group

Please list all members of the Approval Governance Group who have final approval of the document.

Membership of Approval Governance Group	
Name	Role and position
The SOP was developed in house by the PAD office	Ray Mitchell and team PAD office.

Sign-off by Chair of Approval Governance Group

[Dealing with the Provision of Information to Public Representatives (TD's, Senators, MEP's and Local Representatives)] was formally approved by Ray Mitchell, Head of Parliamentary Affairs.

Name: (print)	Ray Mitchell
Title:	Assistant National Director
Signature: (e-signatures accepted)	
Registration number: (if applicable)	

Appendix III: Conflict of Interest Declaration Form



CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

This must be completed by each member of the PPPG Development Group as applicable

Title of PPPG being considered:

NO PPPG group

Please circle the statement that relates to you

1. I declare that I DO NOT have any conflicts of interest.

2. I declare that I DO have a conflict of interest.

Details of conflict (Please refer to specific PPPG)

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ray Mitchell".

Printed name Ray Mitchell

Registration number (if applicable)

Date 11/12/2023

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act. Data will be processed only to ensure that committee members act in the best interests of the committee. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

A person who is covered by this PPPG is required to furnish a statement, in writing, of:

(i) The interests of the person, and

(ii) The interests, of which the person has actual knowledge, of his or her spouse or civil partner or a child of the person or of his or her spouse which could materially influence the person in, or in relation to, the performance of the person's official functions by reason of the fact that such performance could so affect those interests as to confer on, or withhold from, the person, or the spouse or civil partner or child, a substantial benefit.

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