

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Data Protection Officer and Information Governance Manager
MANAGED BY:	Head of Legal Services
GRADE:	13

THE ROLE

ROLE OVERVIEW

This is a senior position reporting to the Head of Legal Services and accountable to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). The Data Protection Officer and Information Governance Manager provides strategic leadership for the Combined Authority's Information Governance (IG) framework, ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements across data protection, confidentiality, records management, information rights (including FOI and SAR) and information security.

The post-holder acts as the Authority's statutory DPO under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, offering independent oversight of compliance, advising on high-risk processing and Data Protection Impact Assessments, and serving as the primary contact for the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and data subjects.

The role leads the Information Governance team, develops and maintains policies, coordinates training and awareness, and ensures effective incident management and risk assurance to the SIRO.

The Information Governance function is part of the wider Legal and Governance Directorate led by the Director of Law and Governance and comprising Legal Services, Democratic Services, Digital, Data and Operations, and Corporate Admin.

The Information Governance team consists of:

- Senior Information Risk Owner (Director of Law and Governance)
- Data Protection Officer and Information Governance Manager (this role)
- Information Governance Officer (line report)
- Matrix leadership of/support to a distributed network of Information Asset Owners (Heads of Service) and Information Asset Custodians across the Authority.

This is a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Statutory Data Protection Officer (DPO)

- Provide independent oversight, assurance and expert advice on the MCA's compliance with data protection and information governance requirements, in line with statutory DPO responsibilities, including records management, retention schedules and information lifecycle management.
- Exercise independent professional judgement in the discharge of statutory DPO duties, including escalation of matters where organisational practice does not meet legal requirements.
- Monitor organisational compliance with data protection legislation and provide clear, risk-based reporting and escalation to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and SIRO.
- Act as the primary point of contact with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and manage regulatory engagement on behalf of the Authority.

Governance, Risk and Assurance

- Support the SIRO in discharging corporate accountability for information risk, including oversight of key risks, controls and assurance activity.
- Lead and contribute to internal and external audit activity relating to data protection and information governance, ensuring recommendations are implemented and tracked to completion.
- Develop, monitor and report on KPIs, risk metrics and compliance measures for data protection and information governance, providing assurance to CLT, the Information Governance Board and the SIRO.
- Establish and maintain effective governance arrangements, including leading the Information Governance Board.

Data Protection Operations and Compliance

- Ensure effective, compliant, and customer-focused delivery of information rights services (Freedom of Information, Environmental Regulations and Subject Access Requests) through leadership of the Information Governance function
- Oversee the management of data breaches, near misses and incident response, including ICO reporting where required, and ensure organisational learning is embedded into policy, practice and training.
- Provide expert advice, support and constructive challenge on Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and data-related risks across programmes, projects and service delivery.
- Provide expert oversight and assurance of data sharing arrangements, including the development, review and governance of data sharing agreements across the Authority and partner organisations
- Provide oversight and assurance of data protection compliance in third-party contracts and supplier arrangements, working with procurement, IT and legal teams to ensure appropriate controls and safeguards are in place.

Strategy, Policy and Innovation

- Lead the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the Authority's Data Protection Strategy and Information Governance Framework.
- Provide strategic guidance on data sharing, data ethics and emerging areas such as new technologies and automated decision-making.

Leadership, Culture and Capability

- Lead and develop the Information Governance function, including direct line management and influencing a distributed network of Information Asset Owners and Custodians.
- Lead, manage and develop the Information Governance Officer, providing clear objectives, coaching, performance management and succession planning.
- Promote a strong culture of information governance through training, communication and continuous improvement activity.
- Lead the development of Data Protection and Information Governance training programmes.
- Influence and support good information governance practice across the Authority and partner organisations, including representation in regional and national networks.
- Manage workload and priorities across the function to ensure high-quality, proportionate and value-for-money service delivery.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Degree-level qualification or equivalent experience
- Accredited DPO or holds a professional qualification in data protection, information governance or records management or equivalent experience
- Comprehensive, expert knowledge and experience of UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in a public sector environment
- Working knowledge of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 in a public sector environment.

Experience

- Strong leadership experience, including the ability to create and execute strategy and motivate diverse teams to achieve a high level of practice and compliance
- Good understanding of and experience at senior manager level and an ability to manage, lead, develop and motivate employees
- Advising senior stakeholders and influencing decision-making on risk and compliance matters
- Significant experience of applying data protection legislation in a complex organisation
- Managing complex or high-risk data protection issues, including breaches or regulatory engagement and advising on data sharing arrangements in partnership settings
- Leading and developing information governance frameworks, policies and practice
- Leading and developing individuals or teams, including influencing beyond direct line management
- Working within or reporting to formal governance, audit or assurance frameworks, including providing reporting to senior boards or committees
- Managing and reporting on information risk in a complex organisational environment, including escalation of high-risk issues
- Advising on data protection risk in digital, automated or technology-enabled environments

Skills and Competencies

- Leadership and motivation - able to clearly communicate and promote a shared vision and inspire a sense of purpose in all managers and staff
- Planning and organising to achieve results - identifies and prioritises strategic objectives that are consistent with the Authority's vision and values. Balances risks and resourcing requirements with desired outcomes
- Delivering excellent service - monitors national developments to achieve compliance and sustainability. Fosters a continuous improvement philosophy and communicates this effectively

- Commitment to continuous improvement, innovation and change - creates a climate that encourages innovation and is receptive to change. Ensures effective processes/systems are in place to deliver high quality outputs and services
- Communicating and influencing - able to demonstrate a range of strategies to influence others and win their support
- The ability to develop yourself and others - understands future needs of the Authority and develops plans to meet them. Proactively manages personal and professional development
- Teamwork and collaboration - willing to challenge inappropriate practices or behaviour. Demonstrates and encourages collaboration and co-operation at the highest level to create an environment where everyone gains from a spirit of mutual co-operation, trust and respect.

DESIRABLE

- Membership of a relevant professional body