Data Protection Office Supervisory Priorities

2023-2024

Data Protection Office
Qatar Financial Centre

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The Data Protection Office ("DPO"), as well as investigating complaints and Personal Data Breaches reported to them by Data Controllers as part of their obligations under Article 31, sets a series of supervisory priorities for the year ahead on its own initiative.

By doing so the DPO provides firms with a clear direction of where to prioritise their efforts.

Transparency Notices

Transparency notices are a corner stone of the QFC Data Protection Regulations 2021 (the "Regulations") and provide Data Subjects with information, in a clear and concise way, on how the firm Processes their Personal Data. The expectation is that firms will have compliant transparency notice(s) in place that are provided to Data Subjects when their data are first collected. There should be clear alignment to the Processes outlined in the Article 30 Record of Processing Operations.

Records of Processing

Article 30 of the Regulations require Data Controllers and Data Processors to have in place a record of their Personal Data Processing operations. This record must include all activities that Process Personal Data by the firm, including those for staff and customers.

The record of Processing operations should be sufficiently granular to provide enough information to understand what Personal Data is being Processed and why and must include all the elements, at a minimum, set out in the QFC Data Protection Rules, Rule 8. This record should be made available to the DPO when requested and should be aligned to the transparency notice provided to Data Subjects.

Data Subject Rights Management

Data Subjects are given a number of specific rights under the Regulations in relation to their Personal Data and being able to enforce those rights is an important way to hold firms accountable.

Firms must have systems and controls to identify and action Data Subject rights requests when they are received. Requests can come into the firm in many ways, including by email, post, or verbally over the phone etc., and are all valid requests under the Regulations.

The Regulations also place a time limit of 30 days when responding to Data Subject rights requests, firms are expected to have systems and controls in place to ensure these time limits are met.

Personal Data Breaches & Reporting

Firms must have an appropriate process in place to identify and record when Personal Data Breaches occur. This may include both organisational and technological solutions to help identify when and if a Breach has occurred.

Firm must also assess all Personal Data Breaches in relation to the potential impact on Data Subjects. Personal Data Breaches that are likely to result in a risk to Data Subjects' rights and legitimate interests must be reported to the DPO within 72 hours of the firm become aware of the Breach.

Finally, firms must consider whether the Breach should be notified to the Data Subjects. This consideration and conclusion should be noted. The Data Protection Office reserves the right under Article 33(2)(E) to order a firm to notify Data Subjects of a Personal Data Breach.

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