



Department for
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Damian Collins MP
Chair
DCMS Committee
House of Commons
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Dear Damian

THE DATA PROTECTION BILL

Thank you for your letter of 15 March in which you asked what consideration the Government had given to the Information Commissioner's concerns about her enforcement powers. As you know, we discussed this very point on Monday in relation to your urgent question and I thought it would be helpful if I set out for the benefit of members of your Committee what I said then.

In our increasingly digital world, it is essential that people can have confidence that their personal data will be protected. It is also important that the Information Commissioner has the enforcement powers she needs.

The Data Protection Bill, currently in Committee, will strengthen legislation around data protection and give her tougher powers to ensure organisations comply. It will enhance control, transparency and security of data for people and businesses across the UK, and gives her the power to levy significant fines for malpractice, of up to 4 per cent of global turnover, against organisations that block the Commissioner's investigations.

We are aware that the Commissioner has recently requested yet stronger enforcement powers in the context of her ongoing investigation into how political parties and campaigns, data analytics companies and social media platforms in the UK have used people's personal information to micro-target voters. The power of compulsory audit is already in the Bill, and she has proposed additional criminal sanctions. She has also made the case that it has become clear that in order to deal with complex investigations like these, the power to compel testimony from individuals is now needed.

We are considering these new proposals and I will write to you again to set out our conclusions.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries and will place a copy in the House library.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Hancock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP