

Bulk Personal Datasets

BULK PERSONAL DATASETS (BPDs) hold personal information on everyone. Bulk Personal Datasets include information we all have to provide simply by being born in the UK or by being a UK resident. Bulk Personal Datasets are used by the intelligence agencies to “join the dots” about people. Bulk Personal Datasets are held by both public and private organisations. Each and every one of us will be on a Bulk Personal Dataset.

What is a Bulk Personal Dataset?

A **Bulk Personal Dataset** describes a collection of datasets containing information on a large group of people. Anyone who is a British citizen will appear on registers and groupings of data which will be used to create Bulk Personal Datasets. The data can be accessed, held and used by the intelligence agencies to make connections about who we are, what we do and who we know, where we go and where we have been.

How are they used?

Bulk Personal Datasets are used by the intelligence agencies; MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, to “facilitate joining the dots”. It is not always known in advance which dataset will help to join the dots so access to many datasets may be required.

The Government admit that the datasets hold the personal data of people who are “unlikely to be of intelligence interest”, including the deceased.

Whether innocent or guilty your data will be acquired, retained and possibly analysed.

What data is in a Bulk Personal Dataset?

The Government say they are unable to provide a detailed list of datasets due to the national security risks this would provoke, but it was made clear during the debates in the House of Lords that any large dataset, such as a telephone directory, are considered to be a Bulk Personal Dataset.

It is logical therefore to assume the following are also examples of Bulk Personal Datasets:

- Electoral roll
- Driving and vehicle licences
- Credit reference agency databases
- Land Registry
- National Insurance numbers
- HMRC tax returns
- Passport database
- Data from ANPR cameras
- Passenger name records from flights
- Oyster card data

These examples are just small number of datasets we believe are collected under this element of the Act.

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Are warrants needed to access the data?

Yes, there will be two types of warrant the intelligence agencies can use for access to Bulk Personal Datasets. These warrants are:

Specific Bulk Personal Dataset warrants which will request one specific dataset - for example the electoral roll.

Class Bulk Personal Dataset warrants which will request multiple datasets regarding an activity e.g. travel data. such as airplane passenger records, the ANPR database and Oyster card data.

Warrants will be authorised by a Secretary of State, any authorisation will be “reviewed” and “approved” by a Judicial Commissioner.

If the Judicial Commissioner disagrees with the warrant they must put it in writing. The Secretary of State can however go above them and ask the Investigatory Powers Commissioner to review the decision.

What concerns are there?

Any of us could be on a dataset used for analysis by the intelligence agencies.

Two parliamentary committees before the Bill became an Act recommended scrapping class Bulk Personal Dataset warrants because they were too intrusive. The recommendation was dismissed by the Government.

Bulk Personal Dataset warrants order organisations and companies to share their datasets with the intelligence agencies. No-one will be able to query or refuse the request.

Bulk Personal Dataset warrants can be openly acquired under covert methods which mean that data can be gathered with no-one knowing.

Don't forget

- All UK citizens appear on at least one Bulk Personal Dataset even if they are not suspected of terrorism or criminal activity.
- Two parliamentary committees said class Bulk Personal Datasets warrants should be scrapped because they are too intrusive. Their recommendation was dismissed.
- Bulk Personal Datasets can be held by the intelligence agencies for six months.
- A Secretary of State authorises a Bulk Personal Dataset warrant, a Judicial Commissioner will “review” and “approve” their decision.