

CASE STUDY



ASSISTING WITH HANDLING A DATA BREACH SUFFERED BY OUR CLIENT'S EX-SUPPLIER

Challenge

Our client was contacted by a previous supplier who had provided accounting and payroll software to them in the past. Unfortunately, the supplier (a data processor) had suffered a personal data breach when one of its employees had stolen a large amount of data from its system. The theft included personal data that related to numerous employees and ex-employees of our client. The data breach involved a very well-known brand, so it was quickly in the public eye. It was imperative for our client to act quickly to manage their own risks in terms of both cost and staff confidence.

Solution

When our client first contacted us about this matter, we were on holiday, as was our client's finance director. Nevertheless, data breaches require timely advice and action to ensure that the situation is contained, and the risks mitigated as much as possible. All drinks were deposited next to various holiday swimming pools and laptops were immediately switched on!

We supported our client to perform an initial data breach investigation and document their findings in an initial data breach report to the Information Commissioner's Office ("ICO"). Following that, we helped our client to liaise with their ex-supplier to discuss what had happened and what steps were being taken to contain the initial incident.

We then assisted with more thorough investigations into the various compliance steps that our client could have taken to manage better the risks and impact associated with this data breach, and to help prevent such an incident occurring again. This involved performing a general review of data breach handling processes, as well as of procedures around the setup – and termination – of data processor supply arrangements.

Impact

Appropriate handling of data breach situations is critical for data protection compliance. Not only can the ICO impose large fines for non-compliance, but there is also the potentially catastrophic risk to reputation and customer confidence, which can severely damage a business's bottom line. Careful handling of data breach situations is also important to help prevent claims against the organisation from affected individuals, which can irreparably damage an organisation's brand and reputation.

We successfully helped our client to liaise with the ICO and the data subjects who were affected by the breach. Our client was pleased that the ICO decided to take no further action against them because it deemed that our client had managed the incident well, learned lessons from it and taken steps to improve their data processes to hopefully prevent future repeat incidents.

Legal directory extract

"Pritchetts Law LLP has always been incredibly reactive, professional and very helpful. Interactions have consistently been extremely well handled, professional, measured and on point. The service provided has always helped us solve issues we were having, and they thoroughly answer any question we bring to them. When dealing with Pritchetts Law LLP, we get a very personalised service with great professionalism."

Quoted in The Legal 500 UK 2021

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