

# Data & Marketing Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2026

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## *“The Guardians of Responsible Data and Marketing”*

### An Overview:

#### *The Data & Marketing Industry*

The marketing industry is important for the growth of the UK economy. It is also responsible for the processing of a significant volume of personal data.

The industry has always evolved to advances in technological developments. The scale and impact of developments in the modern digital era presents new opportunities as well as threats, both for the industry as well as the individuals whose data are being processed. It is also the case that individuals are increasingly aware of their rights and one of the impacts of this is pushing the economic imperative for good data handling practices higher up the agenda for everyone.

#### *The Data & Marketing Association (DMA)*

The DMA is the UK’s trade association for the data and marketing industry. Its vision is a data & marketing industry where every organisation takes a ‘customer-first’ approach. As the voice of the data & marketing industry, its responsibility is to prove the responsible and innovative use of data in marketing drives business growth. It sets the standards for the good of marketers, and most importantly, customers.

#### *The Data & Marketing Commission (DMC)*

The DMC is an independent body, funded by the Data & Marketing Association (DMA) and the Advertising Standards Board of Finance (ASBOF), with responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of the DMA Code and its ethical principles. It does this through the investigation of complaints made by individuals about the data & marketing activities of DMA members through a co-operative approach with individuals and businesses. It is also able to consider emerging issues arising from developments and complaints to contribute advice and support to the DMA to strive for higher professional standards.

#### *The DMA Code*

The DMA Code is an ethical framework that sets the standards for the data & marketing industry to which all DMA members adhere, demonstrating a commitment to build trust and drive effectiveness in marketing. It provides members five clear principles that will guide them to achieve this, and against which their conduct will be measured.

#### *The DMA Code Principles*

**Put your customer first** - Value your customer, understand their needs and offer relevant products and services

<b>Respect privacy</b>	Act in accordance with your customer’s expectations.
<b>Be honest and fair</b>	Be honest, fair and transparent throughout your business.
<b>Be diligent with data</b>	Treat your customer’s personal data with the utmost care and respect.
<b>Take responsibility</b>	Act responsibly at all times and honour your accountability.

## Our Values:

The Nolan Principles are the basis of the ethical standards expected in all areas of public service. The DMC will act in accordance with these principles individually and as a team, working where necessary with other stakeholders.

- Selflessness  
*We will act solely in terms of the public interest.*
- Integrity  
*We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people of organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We declare and resolve any interests and relationships.*
- Objectivity  
*We act and take all decisions independently, impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.*
- Accountability  
*We explain, justify and document the decisions and actions we take, and offer the right to appeal.*
- Openness  
*We take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information is proactively published unless there is a clear and lawful reason for not doing so.*
- Honesty  
*We are honest and truthful.*
- Leadership  
*We embed these principles in our work, and we exhibit them in our own behaviour. We actively promote and robustly support these principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

## Our Purpose:

- To act as an independent self-regulatory body enforcing the ethical principles of the DMA Code.
- To help the industry engage with the Code and its principles around compliant marketing & data handling practices.
- To deter poor marketing & data handling practices through the investigation of complaints and sharing feedback from investigations.
- To take formal action against non-compliance through complaint adjudications.

## Our Strategic Actions:

- **Leading by example**
  - To ensure high standards of governance and accountability on behalf of the Commissioners and the DMC's investigation of complaints.
- **Education, awareness and support**
  - To ensure there is sufficient awareness in the industry as well as amongst individuals.
  - To ensure relevant organisations are aware of the DMC.

- To ensure Commissioner awareness of future and current technological advancements.
- **Operational effectiveness**
  - To ensure the DMC has robust mechanisms in place to ensure accountable, transparent and proportionate investigations.
- **Responding quickly and effectively**
  - To ensure the DMC responds in a timely manner to complaints and businesses and has a robust process in place to do so.
- **Enforcement**
  - To ensure the DMC has a robust process in place to allow proportionate and accountable enforcement of the DMA Code.
- **Building relationships**
  - To ensure the DMC and its Commissioners collaborate and build relationships with all relevant stakeholders – government, lawmakers and the industry.
- **Preparing for the future**
  - To ensure the DMC has in place plans to commit to future growth particularly in relation to the DMC's possible new status as an independent monitoring body accredited to the ICO, enforcing a GDPR Code of Conduct owned by the DMA.
- **Developing and improving**
  - To ensure Commissioner development through yearly appraisals and feedback.
  - To commit to regular assessment of the complaint process to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- **Risk assessment**
  - To ensure risk assessments are appraised on a regular basis.
- **Outcome focussed**
  - To ensure there are well-defined outcomes and goals with in-built flexibility to help measure success and understand if improvements should be made.

### What this means for individuals:

The DMC wants to work with all areas of the industry to encourage high standards of ethical and compliant marketing & data handling practice. Individuals and businesses have a right to expect organisations to respect their rights when their personal data is collected and used.

Relationships can thrive when they are built on trust, confidence, accountability and ethical business practices. The DMC will work with the DMA and Code members to ensure that organisations are clear about what is expected of them, that we are clear about our role in encouraging high standards and responding when those standards are not met, and that individuals can be confident that their interests are being considered at every stage of the process.

### Find out more:

You can find out more at [www.dmcommission.com](http://www.dmcommission.com).