

2026 Public Survey Report



1. Message from the Commissioner

Data protection does not stand still, and neither can the ODPA. Technology is evolving rapidly, new opportunities are emerging and public expectations continue to evolve.

That is why we launched this survey. By listening to individuals, businesses and organisations across the Bailiwick, we can:

- better understand current levels of awareness, confidence and trust within our regulated community;
- identify the challenges people are facing; and
- ensure our future work is focused where it can deliver the greatest impact.

As our first public survey following the launch of our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, it provides a valuable benchmark against which we can measure progress and track changing attitudes over time.

The ODPA's ambitions are underpinned by our strategic pillars of Balance, Trust and Partnership. We seek to:

- choose the right compliance and education tools for the right situations;
- build trust and confidence in the use of personal information; and
- leverage the power of partnership with organisations, individuals and regulatory partners.

The survey provides valuable insights into how effectively these ambitions are being realised and where further effort may be needed to deliver meaningful progress.

The findings are encouraging indeed.

They demonstrate data protection becoming firmly embedded within the Bailiwick, with high levels of awareness among the public as to what 'personal data' is, strong business engagement and widespread recognition that protecting personal information is important.

At the same time, the survey identifies areas where further work is needed. Many people remain unclear about their actual data rights and the ODPA support available to them.

Artificial Intelligence stands out as both an opportunity and challenge, bringing considerable potential for innovation while raising new questions around transparency, accountability, governance and trust.

The survey is not an end in itself. It is a tool that helps us listen, learn and respond. The insights it provides will inform our future guidance, education and regulatory work, ensuring that our efforts and resources remain focused on the issues that matter most to the people and organisations we serve.

I would like to thank Hamilton Brooke who developed and conducted our survey along with everyone who took the time to participate. Your views provide a valuable evidence base that will support our work over the coming years. Together, we can continue to build a Bailiwick where personal information is respected, innovation can flourish and trust in the digital environment continues to grow.



Brent R Homan
Data Protection Commissioner

2. Executive summary

The 2026 survey provides an important baseline of public and organisational attitudes towards data protection across the Bailiwick. It comprises two surveys, one for individuals and one for businesses and organisations. The sample size was 105 individuals and 247 businesses and organisations from across the Bailiwick.

In conducting the survey, our objectives were to: assess awareness and understanding of data protection within the regulated community; measure confidence and key privacy concerns; evaluate gaps in knowledge or support and determine how businesses feel about the guidance and services currently available.

The survey reveals several clear findings that stand out across the responses received:

- a. People are aware of and understand personal data, but not always their rights.
- b. Businesses and organisations want more practical guidance.
- c. AI presents the biggest emerging opportunity and risk, with mixed adoption and confidence.
- d. Online harm to children represents a pervasive concern for Guernsey

It demonstrates that trust remains a key driver of confidence in organisations and both individuals and businesses are looking for practical support to navigate an increasingly complex digital environment.

It is encouraging that the highest levels of confidence in handling personal information were found in banks and financial institutions for the private sector, and the Guernsey Police for the public sector (88% and 77% confidence respectively), especially given the sensitive information they manage. The health sector in general registered solid results at 74% while the States of Guernsey registered a confidence level of 67%. It was clear that islanders expressed very little confidence in the information handling practices of social media platforms at 24%.

The survey results also reflect the expanding influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with implications that offer both benefits and risks for individuals, organisations and regulators. It was noteworthy that adoption for personal use had been reported at a higher rate (73% using at least occasionally) than for business use where almost 60% reported they were not currently using AI. That said, very few were confident that they could recognise when AI was being used in products and services and a clear majority were concerned about how AI uses and stores their personal information.

What was also clear was how online harm to children stands as one of the greatest concerns for Guernsey. As a champion of protecting children online, the ODPa will continue its education programme to promote and protect children's rights both with children and their parents and carers, through partnerships alongside the schools, community and the police. We will also leverage our leadership position on the international stage to advance this priority of global concern, bringing valuable lessons and initiatives back to the Bailiwick.

As for the ODPa, we were encouraged by individuals' expressed awareness of what constitutes 'personal information' but have further work to ensure Guernsey citizens are fully knowledgeable of their data rights. This is contrasted by businesses who have expressed greater confidence in their knowledge of data protection obligations but are looking for further practical guidance to 'help them get it right'.

3. Key findings

Headline statistics from both surveys



Key finding: 91% of individuals reported understanding what personal data is

The public generally understands that personal data has value and requires protection. Data protection is no longer a niche topic, but more work needs to be done. 44% of people questioned said they are not familiar with data protection law or their data protection rights.

Key finding: the public is aware of the ODPA but does not clearly understand its role

94% of those who answered this question said they were at least slightly familiar with the ODPA's role, only 30% people said they had used the ODPA's services.

While a majority recognise the ODPA, on the knowledge spectrum there is a significant gap between individuals' understanding of what 'personal data' is, contrasted against knowledge of their data rights along with exactly how the ODPA may help.

More positively, 63% of respondents were confident the ODPA would help them.

So, many in our community know the ODPA exists but are unclear about:

- what help it provides
- when to contact it
- what rights it can assist with
- how complaints or enquiries are handled

These findings highlight an opportunity for the ODPA to strengthen public understanding of its role, ensuring that individuals know where to turn for support and feel confident exercising their data protection rights.

The confidence expressed in the ODPA also reflects a broader theme emerging from the research: trust is shaped less by the type of organisation and more by whether people believe it will be transparent, accountable and handle their information responsibly.

Respondents expressed the highest confidence in (quite or very confident):

- Banks and financial institutions (88%)
- Guernsey Police (77%)
- Guernsey's health sector (74%)
- States of Guernsey (67%)
- Other Guernsey businesses (41.9%)
- Social media platforms (24%)

NB: this is an overview only; not all sectors are shown above.

The results highlight clear differences in levels of trust across organisations, with trust highest in local sectors such as banking and healthcare and lowest in social media and online platforms. It is quite encouraging that those organisations holding more sensitive data such as the Guernsey Police, finance and health organisations have demonstrated such an elevated level of confidence. The confidence level falls when respondents considered 'other Guernsey businesses' and how they handle personal information, presenting an area where we can continue to focus our workshops and training for SMEs and other Guernsey-based businesses.

3.2 Businesses and organisations

Key finding: awareness of data protection is very strong

95% of the business and organisations who responded said they are quite or very confident that they understand what constitutes personal data. Compared with the individuals' survey, businesses demonstrated higher levels of awareness and engagement with data protection concepts.

This finding helps explain why organisations are increasingly seeking practical guidance rather than basic awareness raising. As in many other jurisdictions, the challenge is less about understanding privacy principles and more about applying them consistently in increasingly complex operating environments.

Key finding: respondents appear broadly aware of their responsibilities under data protection legislation

92% of businesses and organisations questioned are fairly or very familiar with their data protection responsibilities.

However, being aware of data protection obligations does not necessarily mean that a business or organisation is fully meeting them. The survey reflects their own assessment of their understanding; it did not independently assess the measures, processes or governance they have in place.

Key finding: respondents want practical guidance

70% of the businesses and organisations who answered this question found ODPA support useful and identified several areas where additional support would be beneficial.

The areas are:

1. Practical day-to-day compliance guidance (53%)
2. Use of new technologies, including AI (44%)
3. Understanding data protection requirements (41%)
4. Templates and practical tools (37%)
5. Staff training and awareness (32%)
6. Handling data breaches and incidents (28%)
7. Data security and risk management (27%)

The results suggest that most businesses and organisations have moved beyond the awareness stage and are looking for practical, operational support to help them apply data protection requirements in their day-to-day activities. They are increasingly seeking guidance that helps them manage emerging technologies such as AI, demonstrate accountability and translate regulatory requirements into effective practice.

3.3 Technology and emerging issues

Key finding: AI is the new trust challenge: public concern is high as adoption grows

While businesses and organisations are increasingly embracing AI technologies, many individuals remain concerned about how personal information is collected, used and processed within these systems.

66% of individuals who answered this question expressed concern about how AI may use, store or process personal data, making AI one of the most significant emerging issues identified in the survey. Additionally, very few were confident that they could recognise when AI was being used in products and services.

At the same time, the businesses and organisations survey shows that AI is already becoming embedded within organisational operations, with 40% of responding organisations reporting the use of AI tools. Businesses generally reported high levels of confidence in their understanding of data protection responsibilities and compliance obligations. However, the findings suggest a potential risk that AI adoption may outpace governance arrangements, policy development and staff understanding.

As a result, organisations are increasingly likely to require support in areas such as AI governance, accountability, risk management and the responsible use of emerging technologies. The findings reinforce the growing demand for practical guidance that helps organisations innovate responsibly while maintaining public trust.

Finally, it was somewhat surprising that AI's adoption for personal use was reported at a higher rate (73% using at least occasionally) than for business/organisation use where almost 60% reported they were not currently using AI.

Taken together, the findings suggest that AI has become both a trust issue for individuals and a governance issue for organisations. This presents a significant opportunity for the ODPa to support responsible innovation by providing practical guidance, promoting effective governance and helping organisations and individuals navigate emerging technologies with confidence.

Key finding: businesses concerned with keeping up with pace of change

While a quarter of respondents (26%) reported having no major data protection concerns, the most common challenges identified were keeping up with changes to data protection requirements and guidance and understanding data protection requirements. Concerns around data security risks and the use of new technologies, including AI were also noted. These findings suggest that many businesses continue to face challenges in navigating an evolving data protection landscape, highlighting an ongoing need for clear guidance, support and practical resources.

Key finding: public concern focuses on online harms, security and children's safety

While businesses and organisations questioned are primarily concerned with keeping pace with evolving data protection requirements, the public's concerns are more focused on the practical risks associated with personal data misuse.

Online harm to children emerged as the clearest concern, with 73% of respondents reporting they were very concerned. This was followed by hacked accounts (52%), online scams and fraud (46%), organisations sharing information without permission (43%) and identity theft (40%). These results indicate that public concern is driven less by regulatory or technical issues and more by the real-world consequences that can arise when personal information is misused or compromised.

4. International benchmarking

Public awareness of data protection is strong and aligns with international trends

In the Bailiwick, 91% of individuals reported at least a general understanding of personal data. Similar levels of engagement are evident elsewhere. In both Jersey and the Isle of Man, 88% of small organisations said they were aware they could contact their regulator for advice and guidance. This suggests that data protection has become a mainstream issue rather than a niche regulatory topic.

Trust is increasingly linked to transparency, accountability and control

In the Bailiwick, trust varied significantly between sectors, ranging from 88% confidence in banks and financial institutions to 24% confidence in social media platforms.

[New Zealand](#) found that 82% of people wanted more say in how their personal information is collected and used. These findings suggest that public confidence depends not only on legal compliance but also on how openly, responsibly and transparently organisations handle personal information.

AI has emerged as a pivotal privacy challenge worldwide

In the Bailiwick, 66% of individuals expressed concern about how AI uses personal information, which compares closely to [New Zealand](#), where 67% were concerned about organisations using AI to make decisions about people.

In the Bailiwick 40% of organisations reported using AI tools, while similarly the [UK Business Data Survey](#) found that 41% of businesses using digitised data already use AI.

Across jurisdictions, AI is consistently emerging as one of the most significant privacy and data protection priorities.

Organisations are adopting AI faster than governance frameworks are developing

In [Jersey](#), 71% of AI users had identified data protection risks, but only 53% had formally documented them.

In the Bailiwick, 44% of organisations identified new technologies, including AI, as an area where they would benefit from additional support.

The evidence suggests many organisations recognise AI opportunities but are still developing the governance, risk management and compliance arrangements needed to deploy it responsibly.

Conclusion

The benchmarking suggests that the Bailiwick is following the same direction of travel as other jurisdictions. Public awareness is high, trust is increasingly influenced by transparency and accountability, organisations are actively exploring AI, and regulators are placing greater emphasis on governance, risk management and demonstrable compliance. AI stands out as the most significant emerging issue, reinforcing the need for practical guidance and support on responsible innovation.

5. Methodology

The survey was developed and conducted by Hamilton Brooke and we appreciate their work to deliver an evidence-based, reliable survey.

The online survey was sent to all businesses and organisations registered with the ODPa as well as a selection of professional bodies. In a second survey, individuals were interviewed in various Guernsey locations throughout the day/week. Not every respondent answered every question.

Sample profile and interpretation

A broad spread of organisation size and sector as well as age and profile of individuals was obtained. The findings should be viewed as a baseline of respondents' perceptions rather than as exact estimates for the entire Guernsey population or business community. They nevertheless provide valuable insight into awareness, confidence, trust and support needs, helping to inform future ODPa education, guidance, engagement and regulatory priorities.

Confidence and indicative margin of error

Based on the responses received, the indicative margins of error are approximately ± 9.6 percentage points for the individuals survey and ± 6.2 percentage points for the businesses and organisations survey, calculated at the 95% confidence level and assuming a 50% response distribution. These calculations use an estimated adult population of 53,549 for the individuals survey and an organisational population of 22,676, based on ODPa registration figures (21,868 businesses, 732 charities, 73 elected representatives and the three public sector bodies).

Individuals data protection awareness survey - 105 respondents from across the Bailiwick

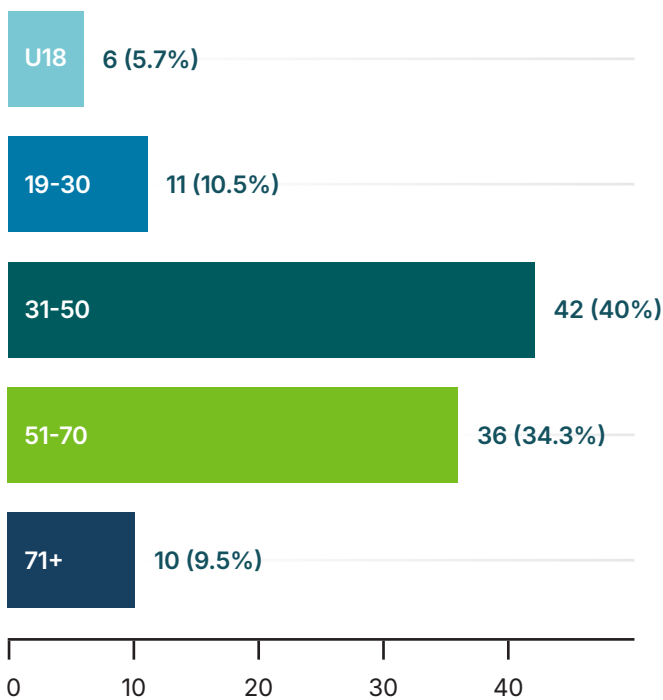
The survey explored:

- Awareness and understanding of personal data
- Awareness of the ODPA
- Confidence in data protection rights
- Privacy concerns and trust in organisations
- Attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence and personal data use

ODPA individual survey: respondent profile

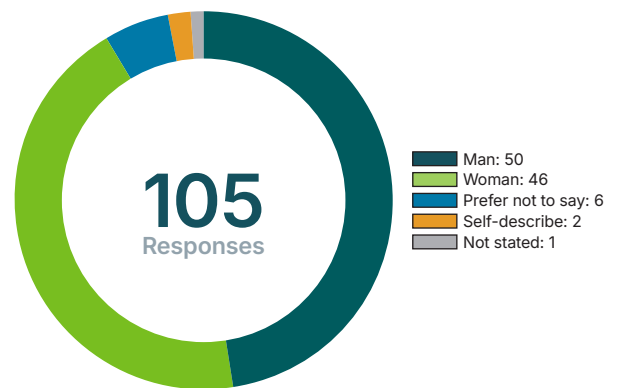
105 responses | Age, gender and selected sample characteristics

Age spread

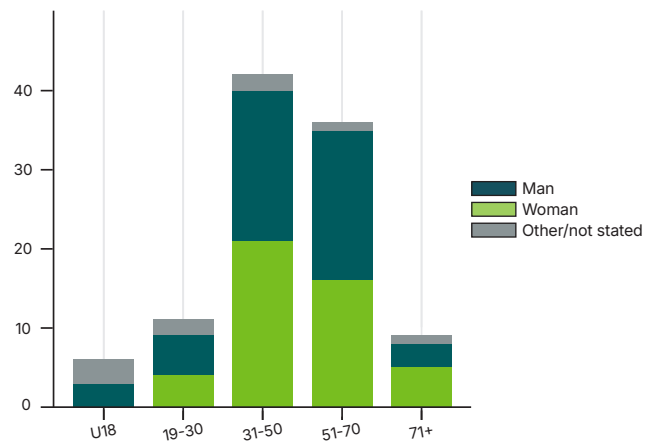


Source: ODPa Individual Survey raw data (105 responses)

Gender spread



Age by gender



Other sample information

ODPA awareness

59.0% answered yes

62

Understanding of personal data

42.9% fully understand

45

Use AI at least occasionally

73.3% of respondents

77

Data protection important

90.5% very/quite important

95

Note: one respondent did not state a gender. Percentages use all 105 responses.

Businesses and organisations data protection awareness survey

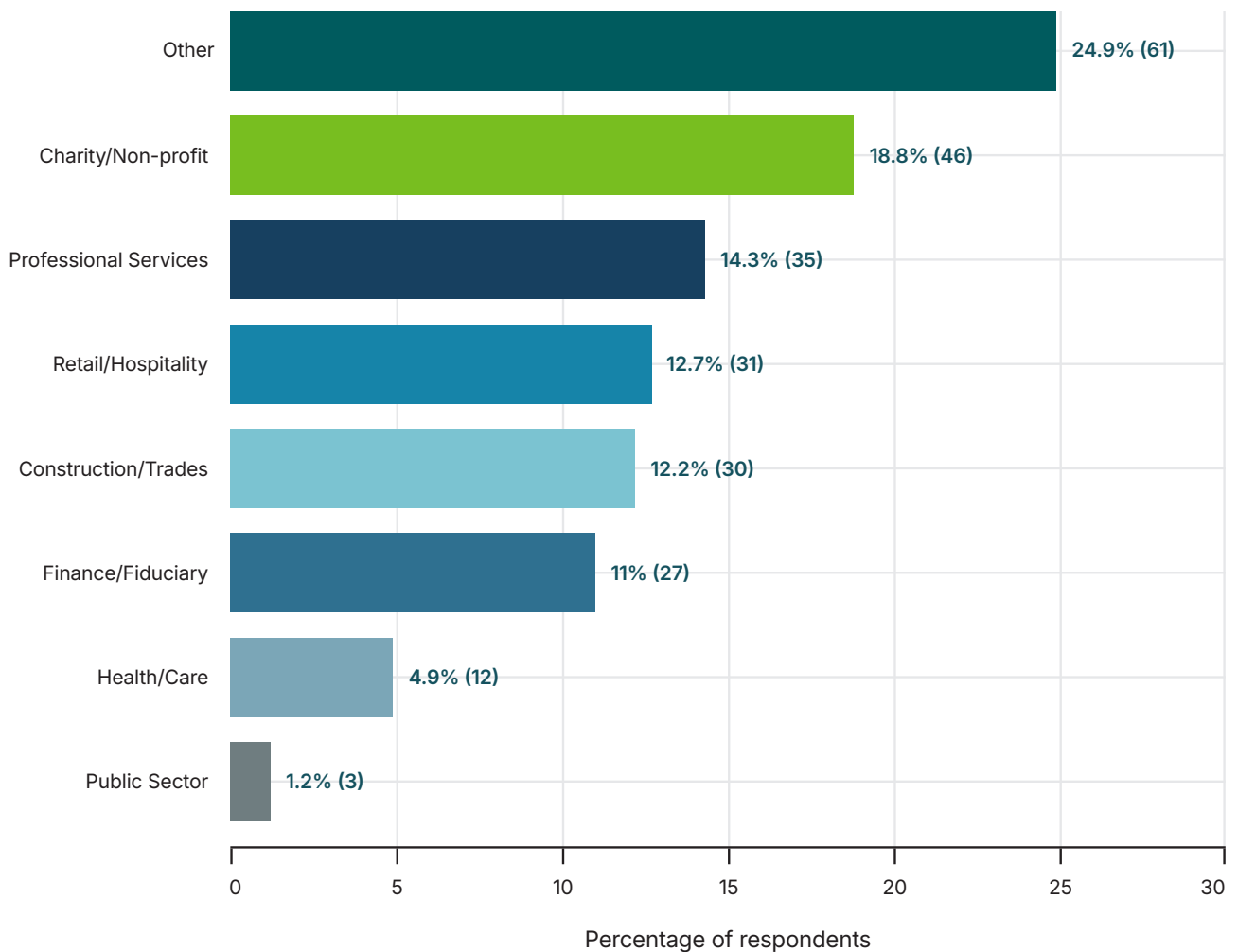
- 247 businesses and organisations

Respondents included a broad range of organisations, with representation from sole traders and small businesses.

The survey explored:

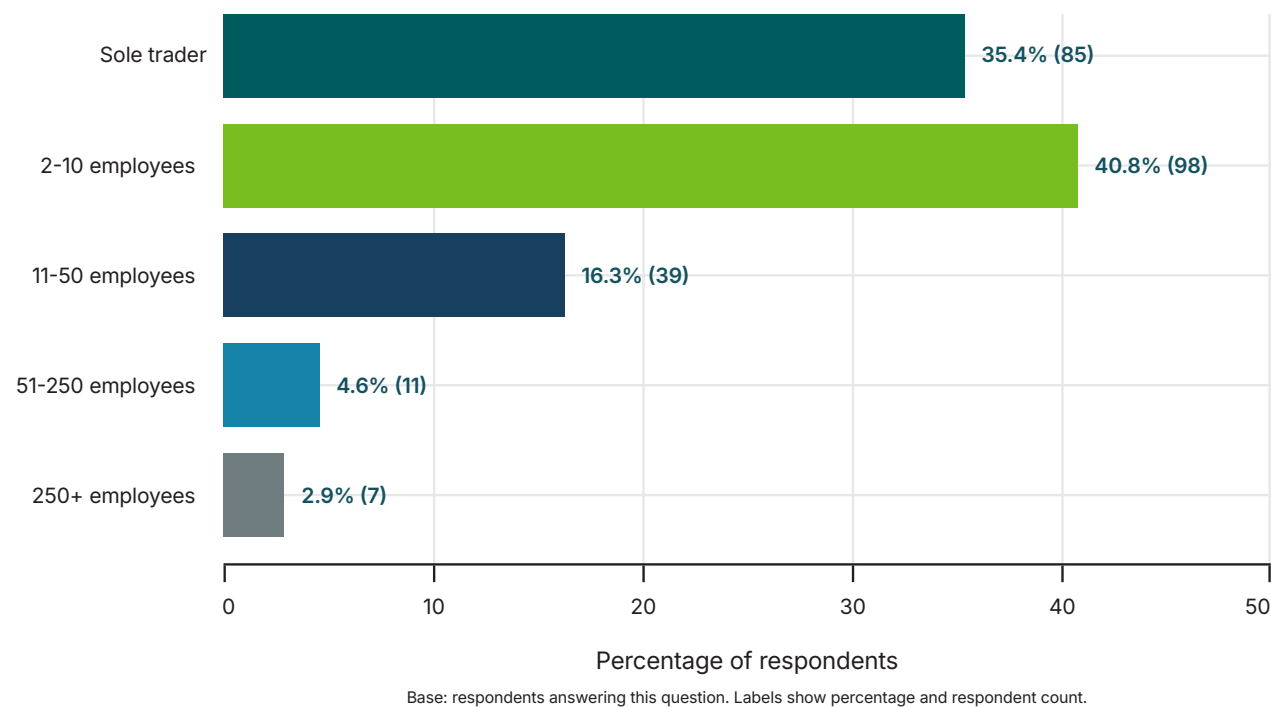
- Awareness of the ODPA
- Registration status
- Understanding of personal data and data protection obligations
- Confidence in compliance
- Use of AI technologies
- Support and guidance needs
- Perceptions of ODPA services

Businesses and organisations survey respondents by sector



Base: respondents answering this question. Labels show percentage and respondent count.

Businesses survey respondents by organisation size



The sample was predominantly made up of sole traders and small businesses of 10 or fewer employees (76%)

5. Strategic priorities

The findings suggest the following key priorities for future focus:

1. Improve public understanding of privacy rights

While awareness of personal data is high, understanding of individual rights is less developed. Continued education and engagement should focus on helping individuals understand their rights and how to exercise them in practice. While the ODPA programme focussed on children, older and vulnerable adults for targeted outreach and education, it is clear that more work can be done to reach the everyday Guernsey citizen.

2. Increase awareness of ODPA support and provide practical guidance

The findings highlight an opportunity to improve understanding of the ODPA's role, services and support while continuing to provide businesses and organisations with practical guidance, tools and resources that help them apply data protection requirements confidently and effectively in everyday operations.

3. Support responsible innovation and strengthen AI governance

AI presents both significant opportunities and emerging risks. There is a growing need for practical guidance that helps organisations innovate responsibly while maintaining transparency, accountability and public trust.

4. Address online harms and emerging digital risks

The continued prominence of concerns relating to children's online safety, scams, hacking and identity theft highlights the importance of supporting individuals, families, schools and organisations in navigating digital risks safely and confidently. This validates the ODPA's leading position in promoting and protecting children's rights and encourages our continued focus in this area.

5. Strengthen trust through transparency and good governance

Public confidence is strongly influenced by perceptions of transparency, accountability and responsible information handling. Supporting organisations to build and maintain trust should remain a central priority.

7. Sources

- [ODPA Strategic Plan](#)
- [ODPA Annual Survey \(Personal\) 2026](#)
- [ODPA Annual Survey \(Business\) 2026](#)
- [New Zealand Privacy Survey 2026](#)
- [ICO Public Attitudes Survey 2026](#)
- [UK Business Data Survey 2026](#)
- [Cisco Global Privacy Benchmark 2026](#)
- [Jersey Data Protection Maturity Survey](#)
- [Canadian Privacy Research 2025](#)



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The Bailiwick of Guernsey's independent supervisory authority which regulates data protection legislation. The ODPA protects people by driving responsible use of personal information through helping organisations get it right, deterring harmful information handling, and taking enforcement action against significant non-compliance.