Speaking ahead of International Data Privacy Day 2015 on 28th January, Minister for Data Protection, Dara Murphy TD, revealed his main areas of focus over the coming months.

Minister Murphy, Ireland’s dedicated Data Protection Minister, said that one of his early priorities is educating people about the responsibility they must take over their own data.

He spoke of the ‘whole layer of challenges’ that apply in social media in respect of implied consent for data sharing, that will be tackled by the new Data Protection Regulation. He said websites need to prepare to provide consumers with explicit rather than implied consent about how their data are used and shared.

Mr Murphy described the performance of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner under previous Commissioner Billy Hawkes and recently appointed Commissioner Helen Dixon as ‘exemplary’ and said that resources are being increased. (The ODPC is to open a new office in Dublin and hire 45 new people — see the news item on page 17).

In terms of managing his own team, Mr Murphy said he has met with all the Department Secretaries of the Irish government to make clear their responsibilities when it comes to data protection.

The Minister described the public anger at Irish Water gathering PPS numbers of home-owners as a ‘particularly ugly affair’. The ensuing outcry saw Environment Minister Alan Kelly reverse the ‘mandatory’ process and now Irish

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