

Investigatory Powers Commissioner to oversee UK-US Data Access Agreement

News story

Independent Investigatory Powers Commissioner will provide oversight of the UK's use of the UK-US Data Access Agreement.



The Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC), Sir Brian Leveson, will be responsible for providing independent oversight of the UK's use of the new UK-US Data Access Agreement when it comes into use later this year, the government announced today.

The agreement, a world-first, will allow certain UK public authorities, including law enforcement, to request electronic data directly from US telecommunications operators through a court-approved order or a warrant, speeding up investigations and the prosecution of serious criminals.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

My priority is to give law enforcement the powers they need to go after criminals and better protect victims. This landmark Agreement will dramatically speed up the investigation and prosecution of the most serious offenders.

I am grateful to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner for providing this essential independent oversight of the UK's use of the Agreement.

As part of the agreement, both the UK and the US are required to ensure that the agencies which use the agreement maintain high standards of data protection and privacy safeguards.

The UK government has therefore set out in law that the IPC shall keep the compliance of UK agencies with the Agreement under review, providing independent oversight to help ensure that it is being used in accordance with

its terms.

The IPC provides independent oversight and authorisation of the use of investigatory powers by intelligence agencies, police forces and other public authorities, reflecting the UK's international reputation for transparency and the protection of human rights.

The UK/US Data Access Agreement completed its ratification in Parliament earlier this year. This month, the agreement will also complete its scrutiny process in the US Congress – another significant milestone in bringing the agreement into use.

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