

UK watchdog fines child care company for selling data

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Britain's information watchdog has fined a firm that offers advice on pregnancy and child care 140,000 pounds (\$180,000) for illegally collecting and selling personal information that ended up being used in a database for the Labour Party.

The Information Commissioner's Office said Lifecycle Marketing (Mother and Baby) Ltd, also known as Emma's Diary, sold the information on 1 million people to Experian Marketing Services. Experian created a database to help the Labour Party profile new mothers before Britain's 2017 general election.

The case is part of ongoing investigations into the use of data for political purposes.

"Even though this company was not directly involved in political campaigning, the democratic process must be transparent," Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said in a statement. "All organizations involved in political campaigning must use personal information in ways that are transparent, lawful and understood by the UK public."

The Information Commissioner's Office said the company's privacy policies didn't disclose that the data would be used for political marketing or by political parties. Lifecycle Marketing said it "never previously provided data to a political party" and would "never do so again."

"We are sorry that on this isolated occasion our interpretation of the Data Protection Act has not been in line with the ICO's," the company said.

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