


Awareness of, and preparation for, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in SMEs

An Amárach Briefing for

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Methodology

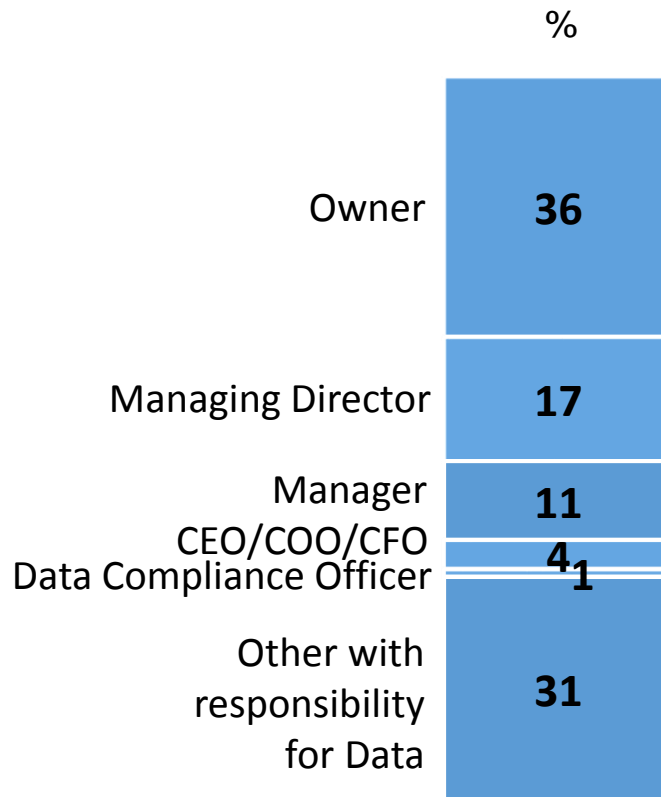


- Amárach was commissioned by the Data Protection Commissioner to conduct a national research project to capture, analyse and determine small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) understanding and levels of awareness of their obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- To effectively examine knowledge, interviews were conducted with 500 businesses spread across the Republic of Ireland, including a good distribution of micro-, small and medium enterprises and across a range of industry sectors.
- The questionnaire was designed and supplied by the Data Protection Commissioner.
- The surveys were carried out via phone employing Amárach's in-house CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system.
- They were asked a series of questions exploring the following:
 - Types of data collected
 - Knowledge of data law
 - Awareness of, and preparation for, GDPR
- Interviewing fieldwork took place between 24th of April – 10th of May 2017.

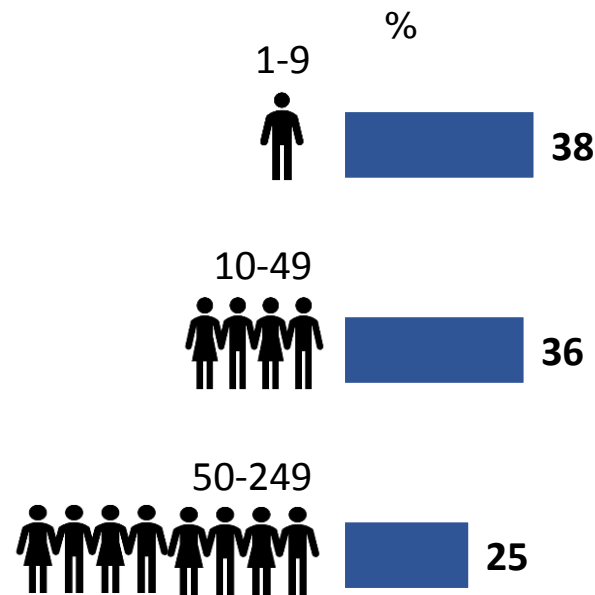
Respondent Profile

(Base: All respondents - 500)

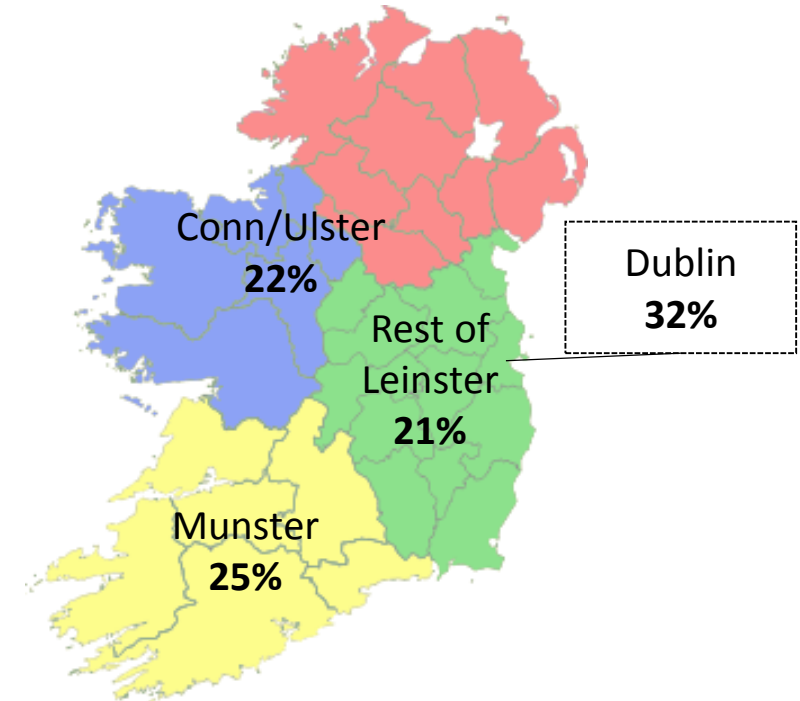
Respondent position



Size of Organisation



Region



Quotas were set to ensure there was a good distribution of micro (1-9 employees), small (10-49 employees) and medium (50-249 employees) enterprises* operating across Ireland.

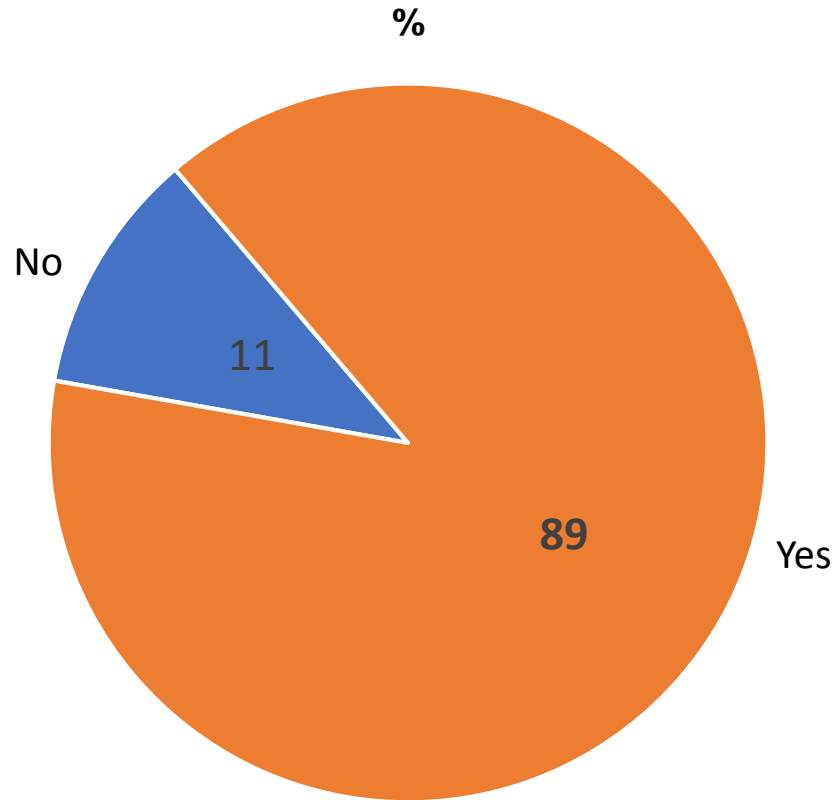
*sizes as defined by OECD <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3123>

Results



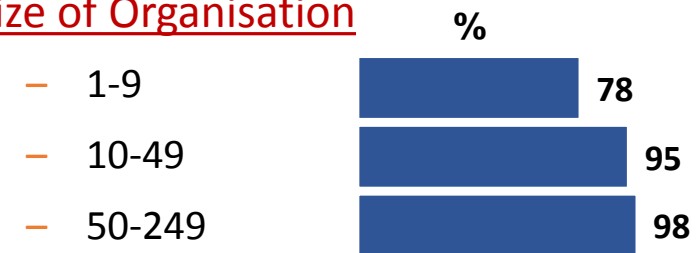
The majority of SMEs collect and use personal data...

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation



Region





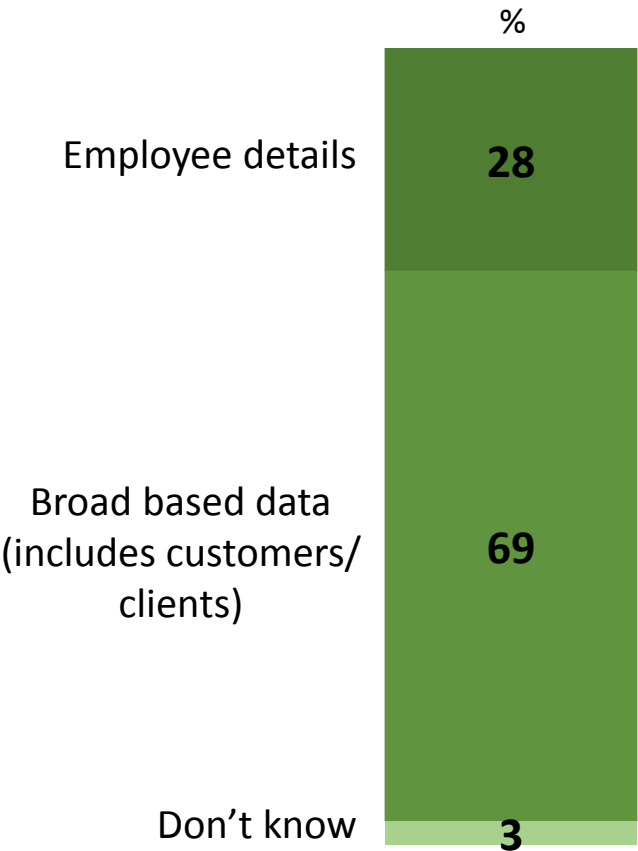
Q.1 Does your organisation collect and use personal data? (eg. Employee data inc. payroll etc, database of customer details)?

Micro enterprises (1-9 employees) are much less likely to identify that they collect and use personal data (78%) when compared to small and medium enterprises (95% and 98% respectively).

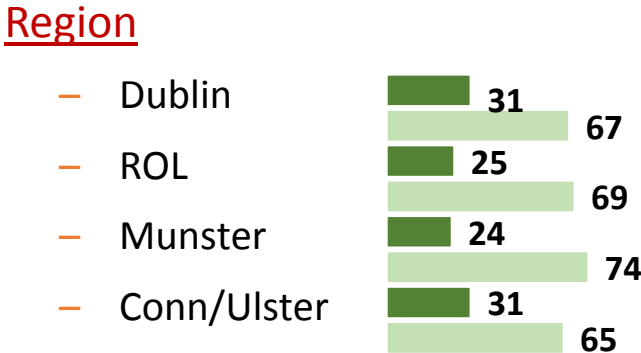
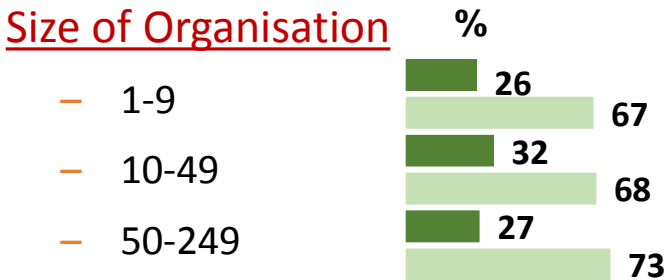
...with over two-thirds collecting information about customers/clients

(Base: All respondents - 500)

Employee 
Broad based 



Demographics for data type collected

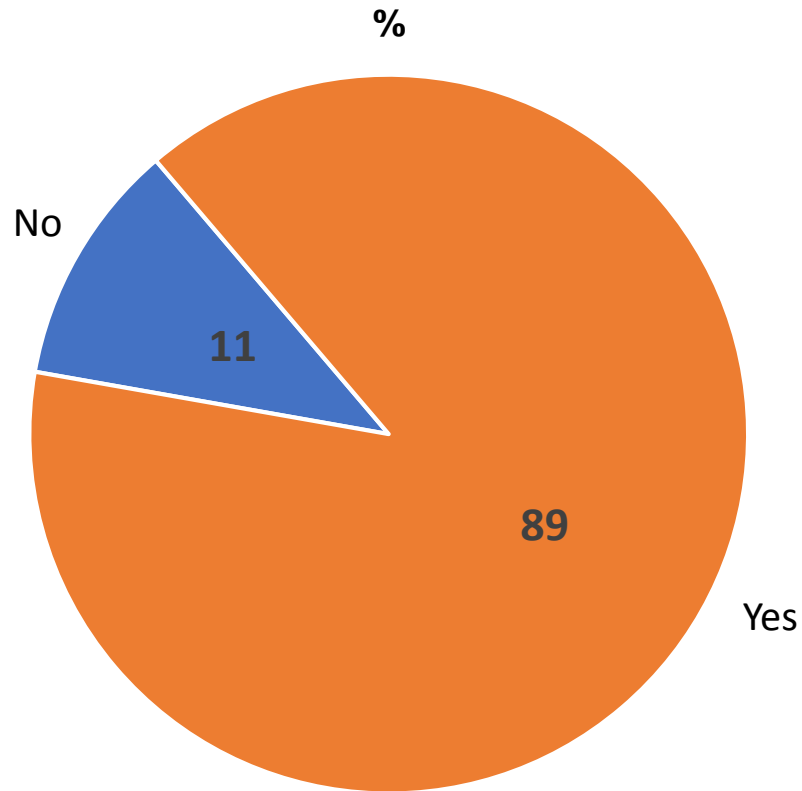


Q.2 Is the data you collect and process confined to personal information about your employees or more broad-based to include information about your customers/clients?

Nearly three quarters of medium businesses (73%) and businesses in Munster (74%) gather data which includes customer and client data.

The majority of SMEs are aware of data laws in general...

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation



Region



Collect & use data



Type of data collected

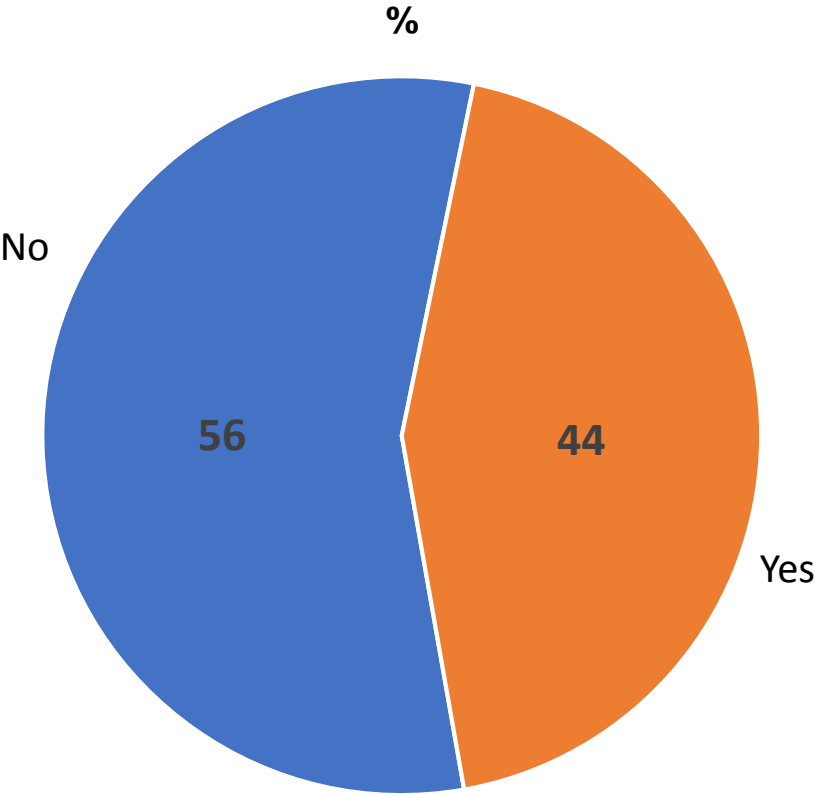


Q.3 Are you aware that there are laws governing the collection and use of personal data?

Nearly all medium businesses are aware of data laws (99%), although over four in five small and micro enterprises are also aware (84% and 87% respectively).

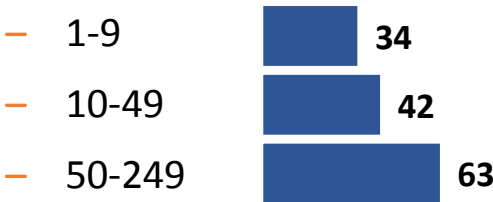
...but less than half of respondents are aware that changes to data laws are imminent.

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



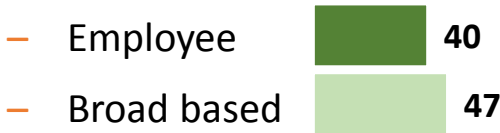
Region



Collect & use data %



Type of data collected



Aware of Data Law

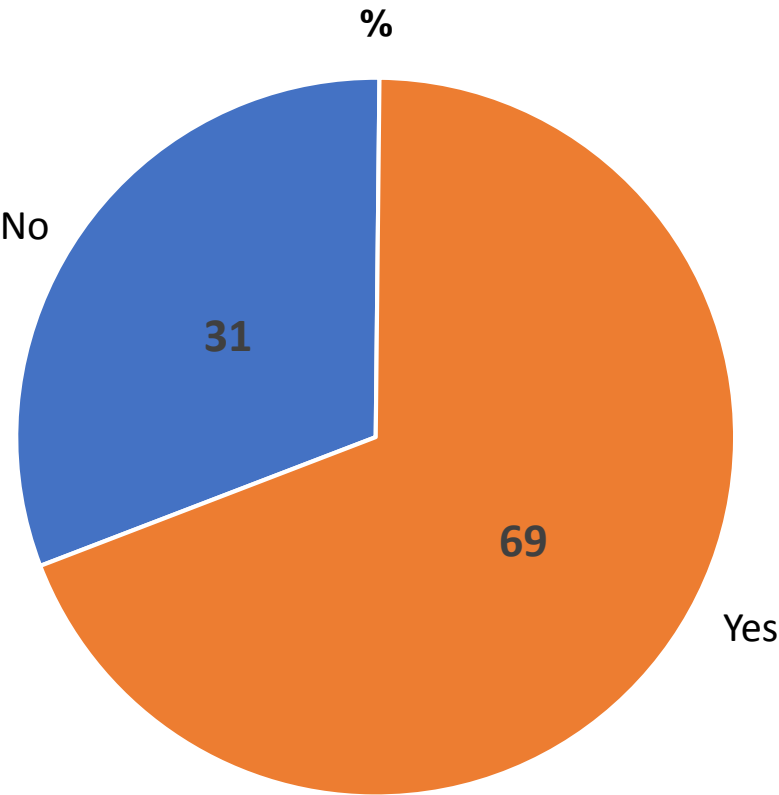


Q.4 Are you aware that major changes to data protection laws are imminent?

Nearly two thirds of medium enterprises (63%) are aware that data protection laws are changing, while only one third of micro enterprises are aware (34%). Businesses in Dublin are also more likely to be aware of the forthcoming changes (56%).

Over two thirds of SMEs have heard of GDPR...

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent

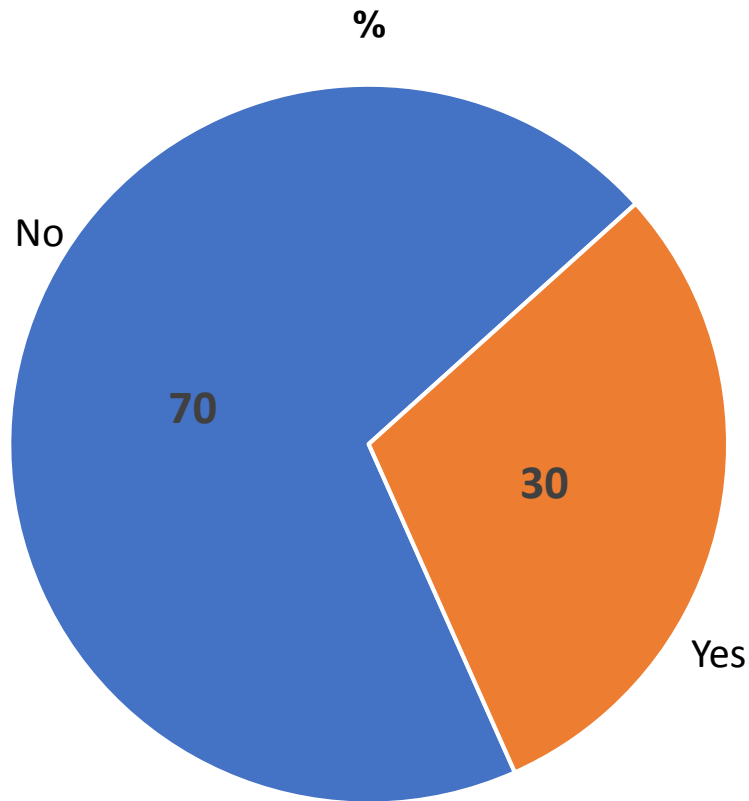


Q.5 Have you heard of the General Data Protection Regulation?

Medium enterprises are much more likely to have heard of the GDPR compared to small or micro enterprises (80%, 70% and 61% respectively), while businesses aware of data law or aware that changes are imminent are also more likely to have heard of GDPR.

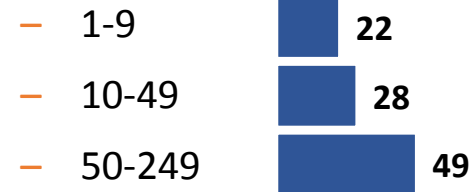
...yet less than one third are aware GDPR will be in effect in 2018...

(Base: All respondents - 500)

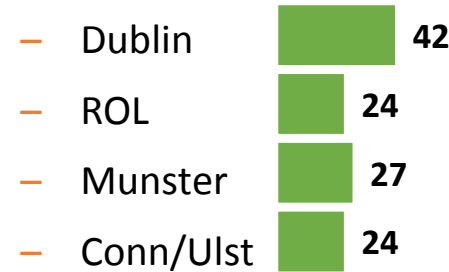


Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

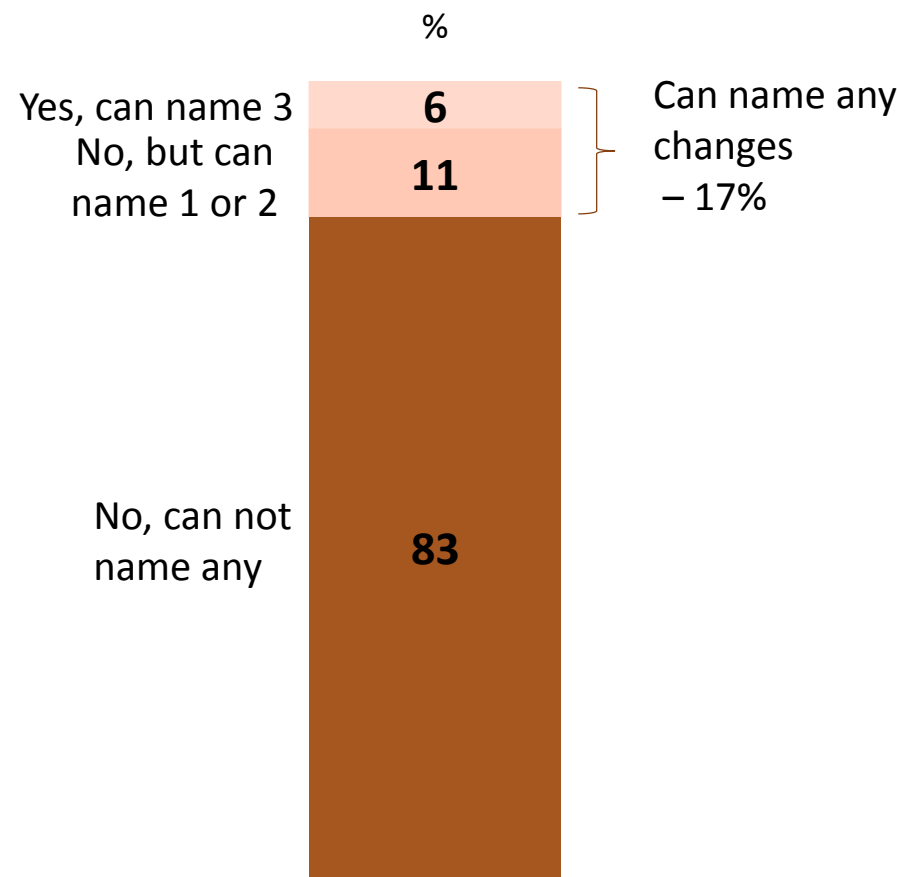


Q.6 Do you know that the General Data Protection Regulation will be effective from 25th May 2018?

Despite high levels of awareness of GDPR, less than one third of companies know it is coming into effect in 2018, falling to 22% in micro-enterprises. Medium enterprises and SMEs in Dublin, or that are aware changes are imminent are more likely to know.

...and less than one in five SMEs can name any changes as a result.

(Base: All respondents - 500)

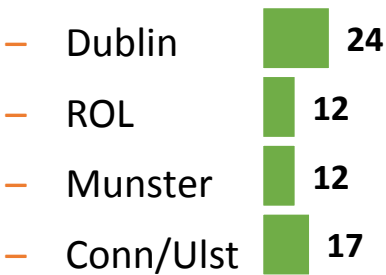


Demographics for can name any changes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

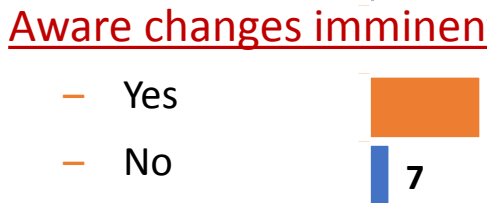
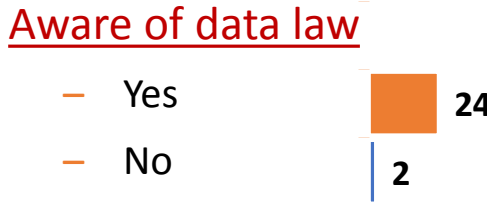
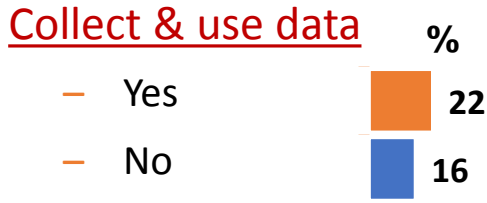
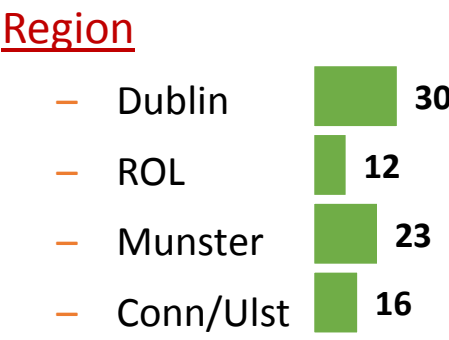
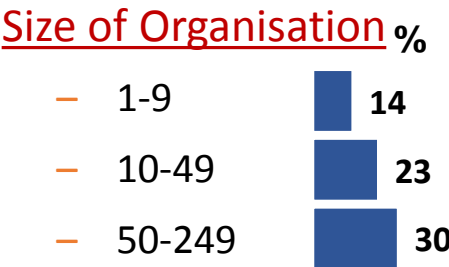
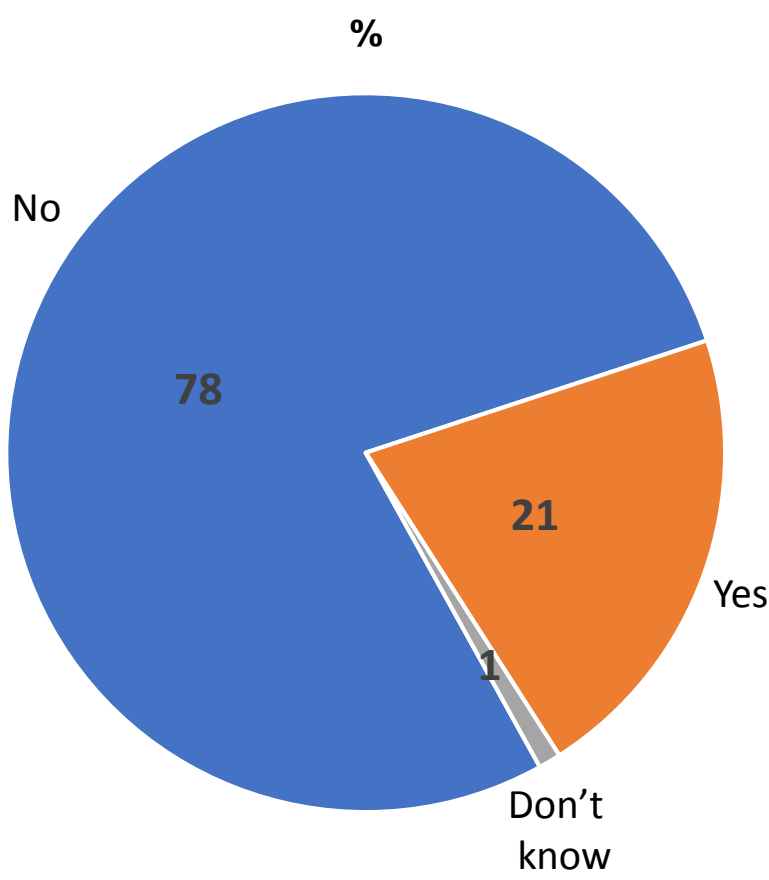


Q.7 If you were asked to name three changes that the General Data Protection Regulation will mean for your organisation, could you?

Medium enterprises (26%), SMEs in Dublin (24%), those aware of the GDPR (24%) or that changes are imminent (34%) are more likely to be able to name changes. However, less than two in five in these categories can name any changes.

Four in five SMEs have not identified actions to take to comply with GDPR...

(Base: All respondents - 500)

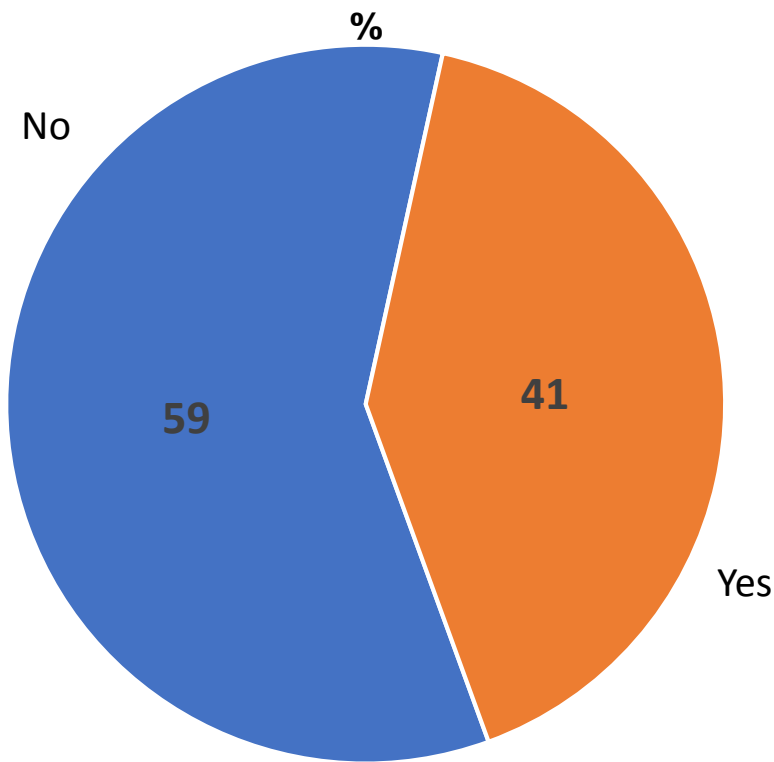


Q.9 Have you identified the steps/actions that your organisation will need to take to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation?

Micro enterprises, SMEs that have not heard of the GDPR and SMEs that are unaware that changes are imminent are particularly unlikely to have identified steps which need to be taken.

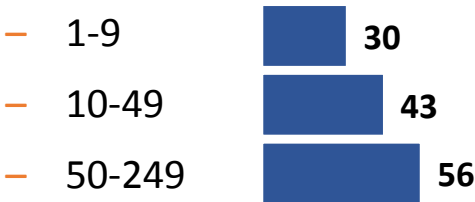
...and three in five SMEs are unaware of fines associated with failure to comply with GDPR.

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR




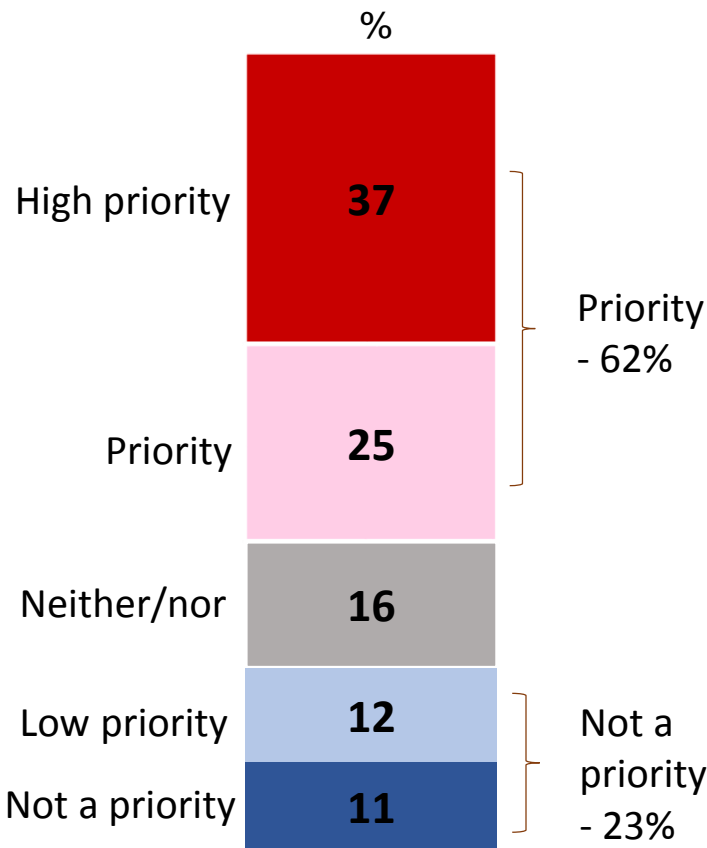
Q.16 Are you aware of the large scale administrative fines that can be imposed for failing to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation?

Just over half of medium enterprises (56%) and SMEs in Dublin (53%) were aware of fines associated with noncompliance. The majority of SMEs which were aware of imminent changes were aware of fines (71%).

Three in five SMEs feel data compliance is a priority in their organisation.

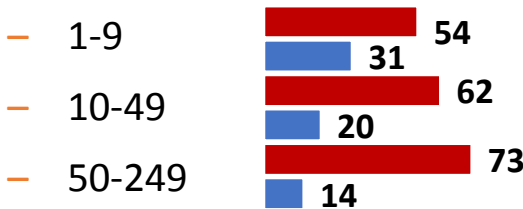
(Base: All respondents - 500)

Priority 
Not a Priority 

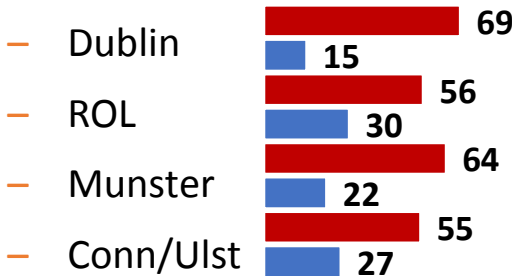


Demographics for level of priority

Size of Organisation %



Region



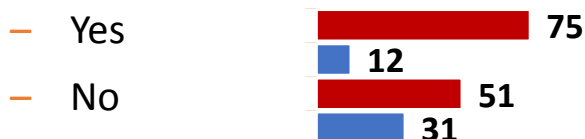
Collect & use data %



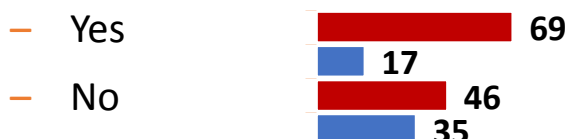
Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

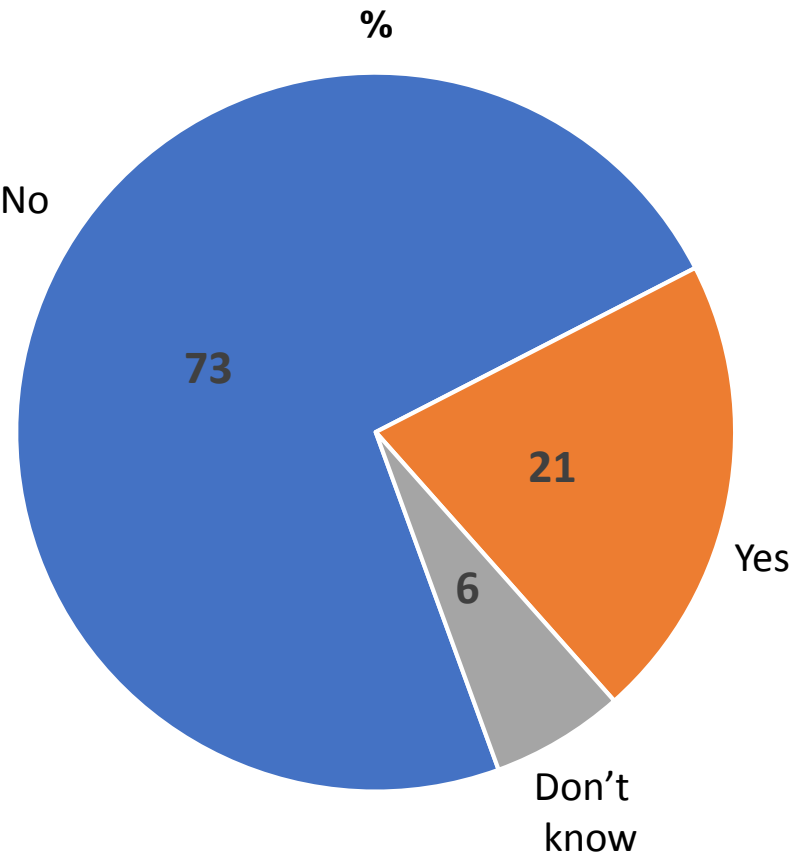


Q.17 To what extent do you think data protection compliance is a priority in your organisation at owner/boardroom/senior management level?

Nearly two thirds of SMEs (62%) feel data protection compliance is a priority in their organisation; this falls to 54% of micro-enterprises.

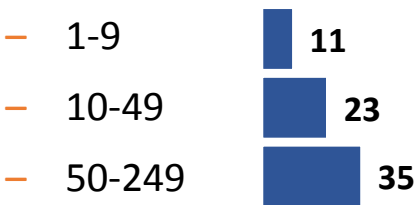
Despite this, nearly three quarters of SMEs don't know if they will have to appoint a Data Protection Officer...

(Base: All respondents - 500)

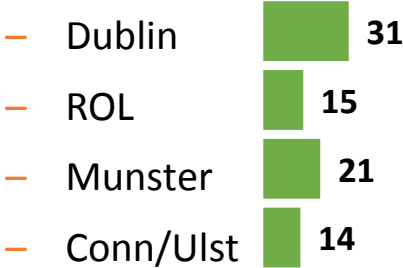


Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

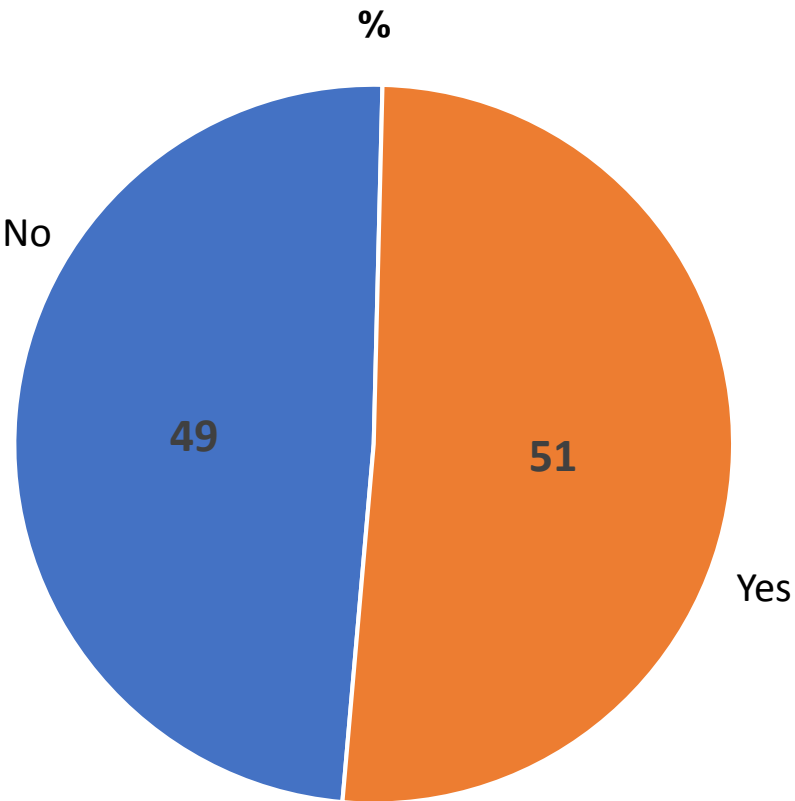


Q.8 For example, do you know if your organisation will be required to appoint a Data Protection Officer?

Nearly 90% of micro enterprises and over 90% of those unaware that changes are imminent are unaware whether they will need to appoint a Data Protection Officer.

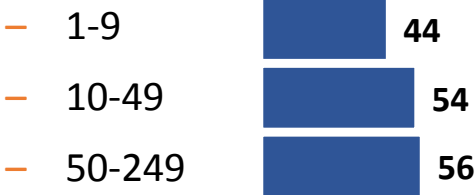
...although half of SMEs have an employee responsible for data Protection.

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

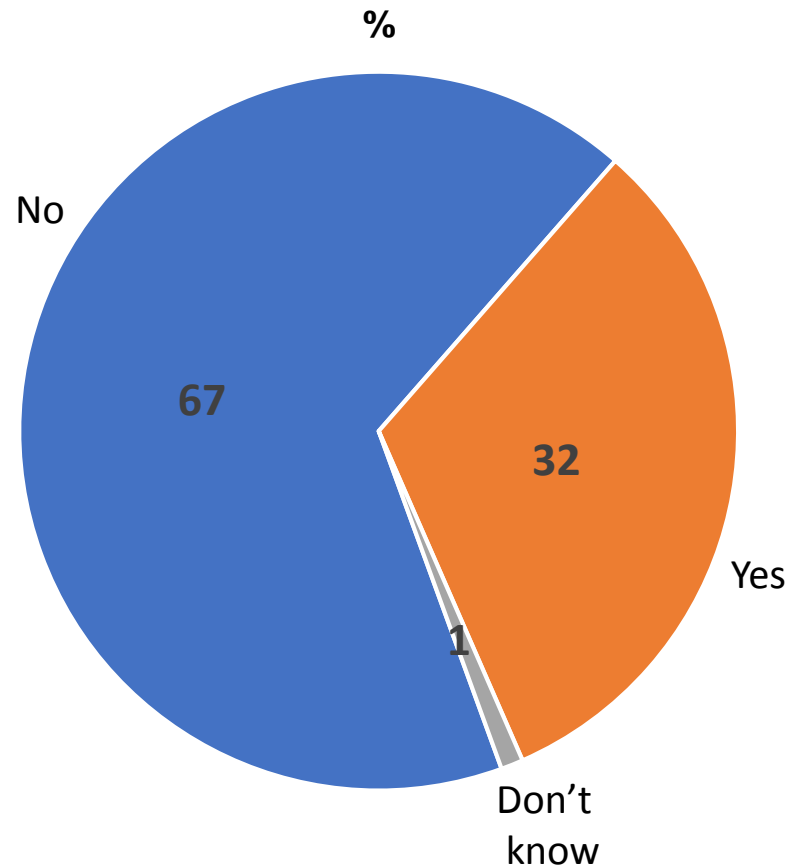


Q.10 Do you have a staff member(s) who is responsible for overseeing compliance with data protection and preparing for the GDPR?

SMEs in the Rest of Leinster (39%) or which are unaware of data law (31%), GDPR (35%) or that changes are imminent (39%) are much less likely to have an employee responsible for data protection.

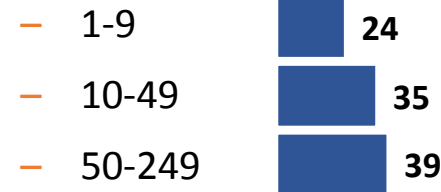
Two thirds have not assessed the personal data held...

(Base: All respondents - 500)

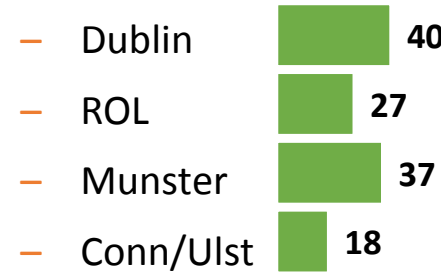


Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



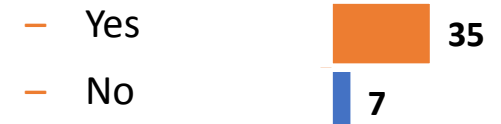
Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

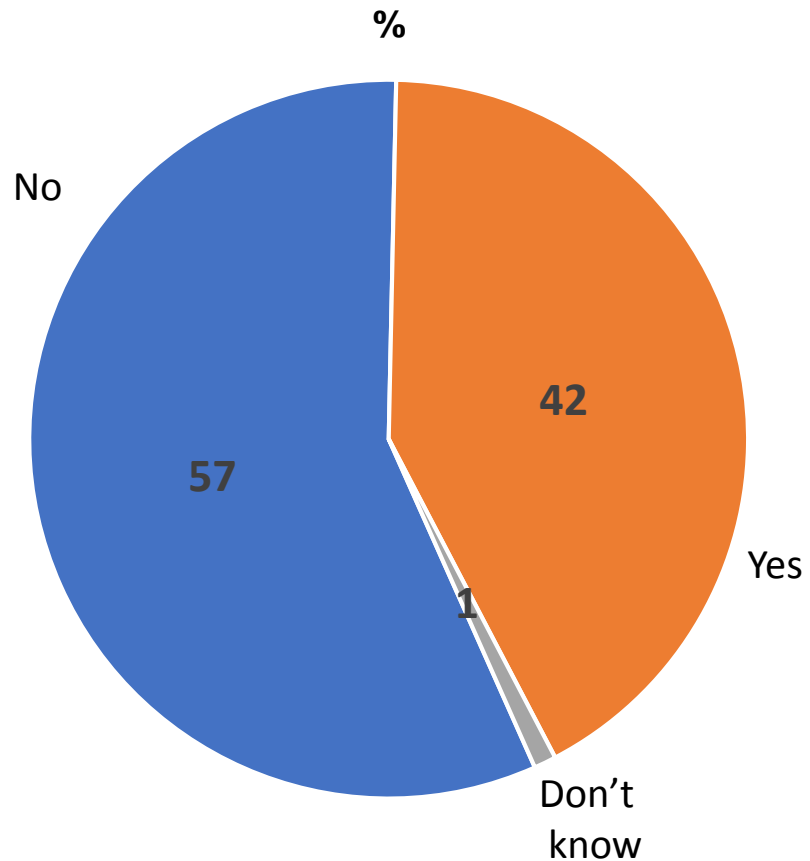


Q.11 Have you carried out an assessment of all the personal data you hold?

Medium enterprises (39%) and SMEs in Dublin (40%) and Munster (37%) are more likely to have assessed the personal data held.

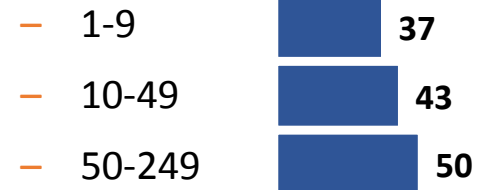
...while over half have not assessed why personal data is held...

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

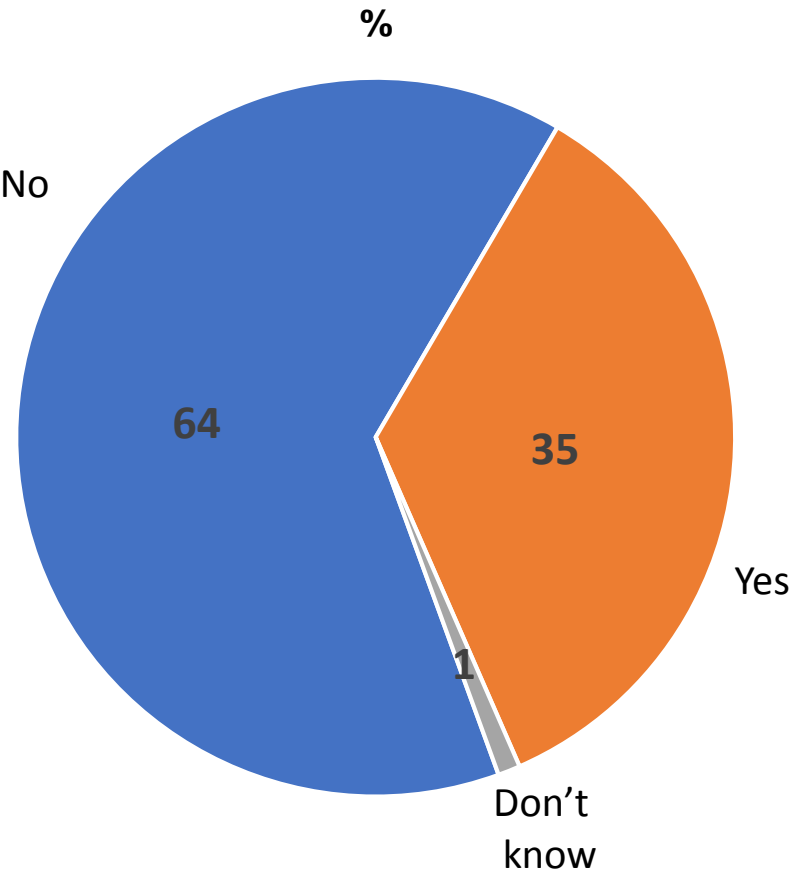


Q.12 Have you carried out an assessment of why you hold personal data?

Medium enterprises (50%) and SMEs in Dublin (54%) or which are aware of GDPR (52%) or that changes are imminent (49%) are more likely to have assessed why personal data is held.

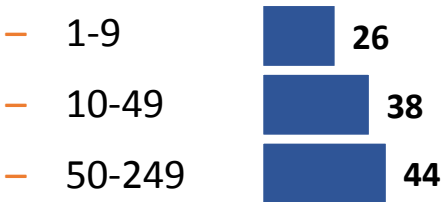
...and nearly two thirds have not assessed how long they need to keep this data.

(Base: All respondents - 500)

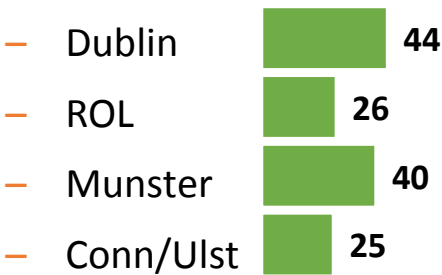


Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR

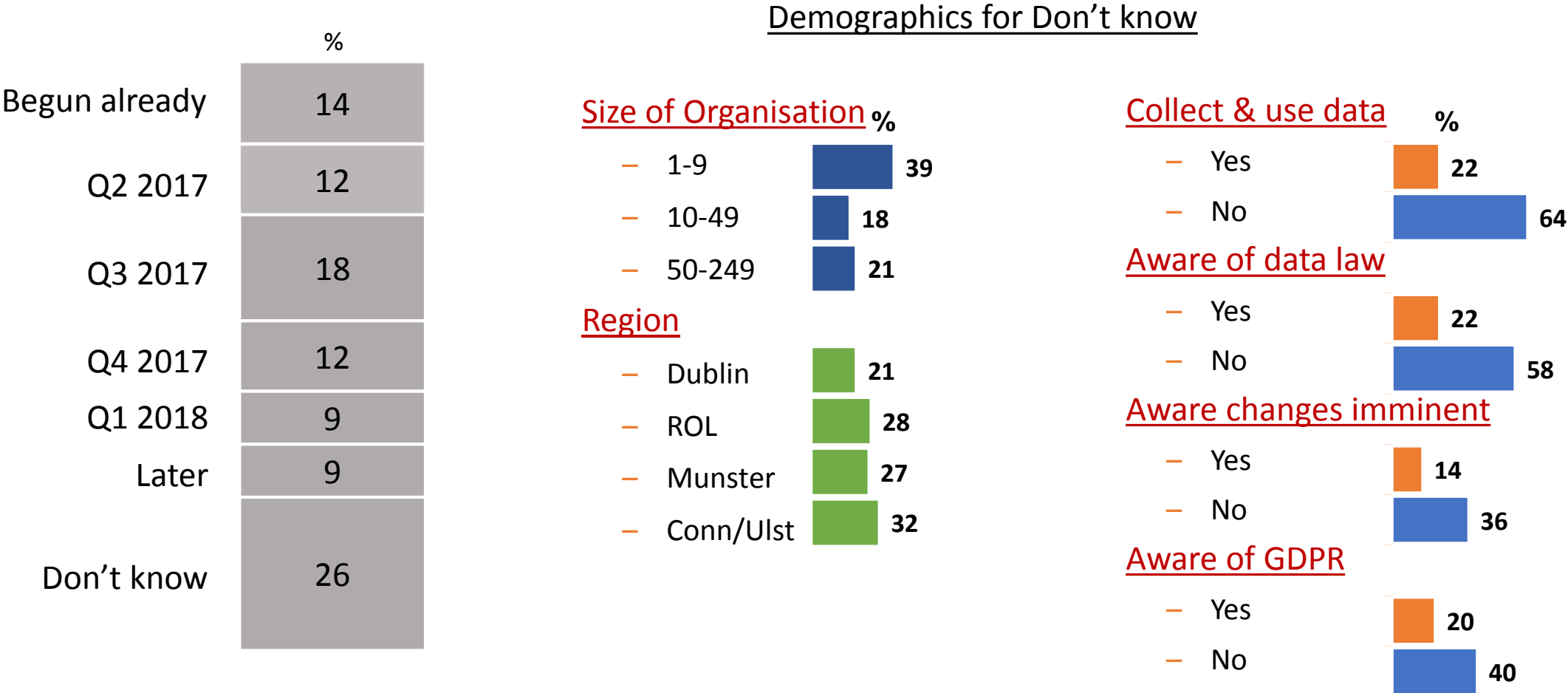


Q.13 Have you carried out an assessment of how long you need the personal data you hold?

Medium enterprises (44%) and SMEs in Dublin (44%) or which are aware of GDPR (48%) or that changes are imminent (43%) are more likely to have assessed how long they need to keep personal data.

One quarter of SMEs don't know when they'll begin their GDPR plan

(Base: All respondents - 500)

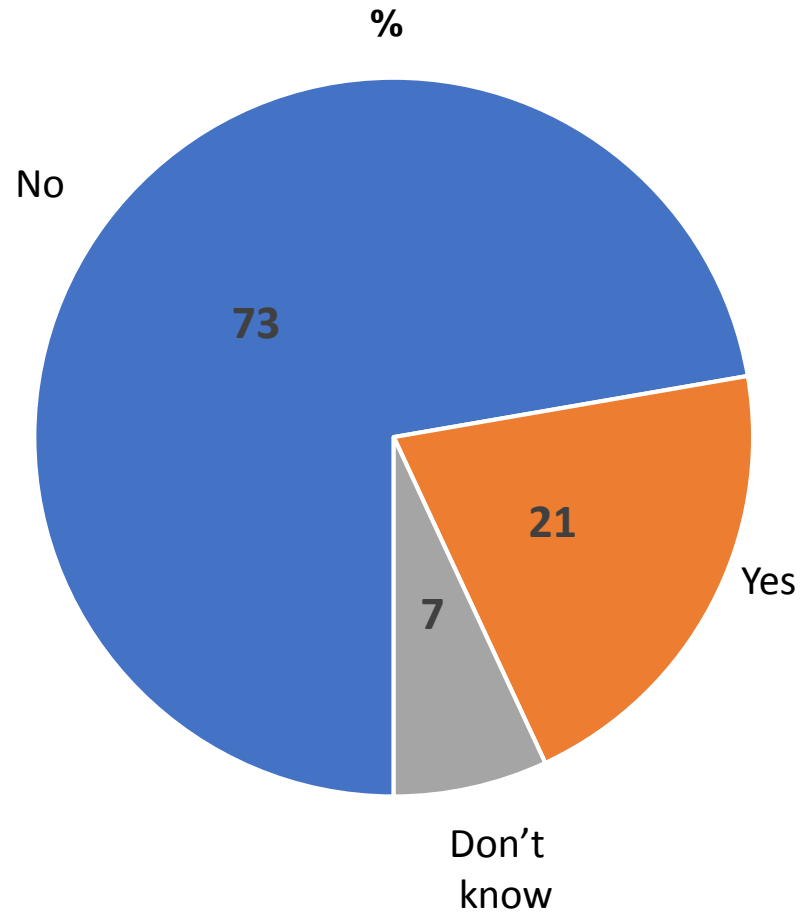


Q.18 When do you plan on beginning your GDPR implementation plan?

Overall, one in four SMEs (26%) don't know when they plan on beginning a GDPR implementation plan; while nearly two in five (39%) micro-enterprises don't know.

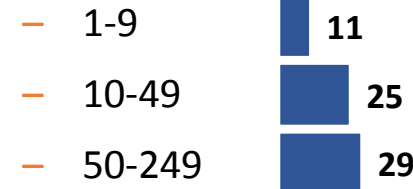
Yet nearly three quarters are not planning on using an external resource to prepare for GDPR:

(Base: All respondents - 500)

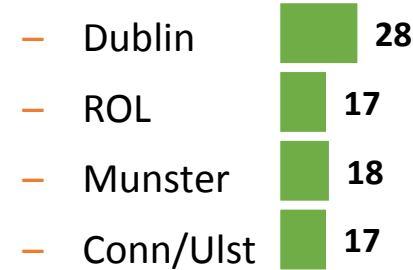


Demographics for yes

Size of Organisation %



Region



Collect & use data %



Aware of data law



Aware changes imminent



Aware of GDPR



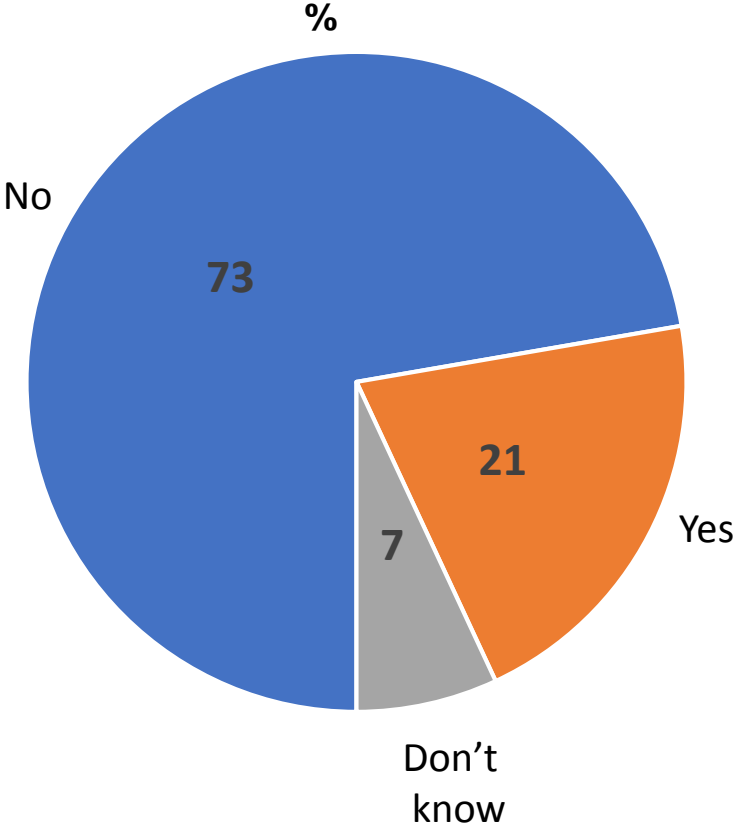
Q.14 Are you using, or planning to use, an outside resource to help your organisation prepare for the General Data Protection Regulation?

Only one in ten micro-enterprises (11%) are planning on using an external resource to prepare for GDPR. However, nearly one third of medium enterprises (29%) and one third of those aware of imminent changes (33%) are planning on using an external resource.

SMEs using an external resource are more likely to engage with consultancy than law firms to help prepare...

(Base: All respondents - 500)

Using an outside resource to prepare for GDPR?



What type of service provider are you using?

(Base: All using external - 104)

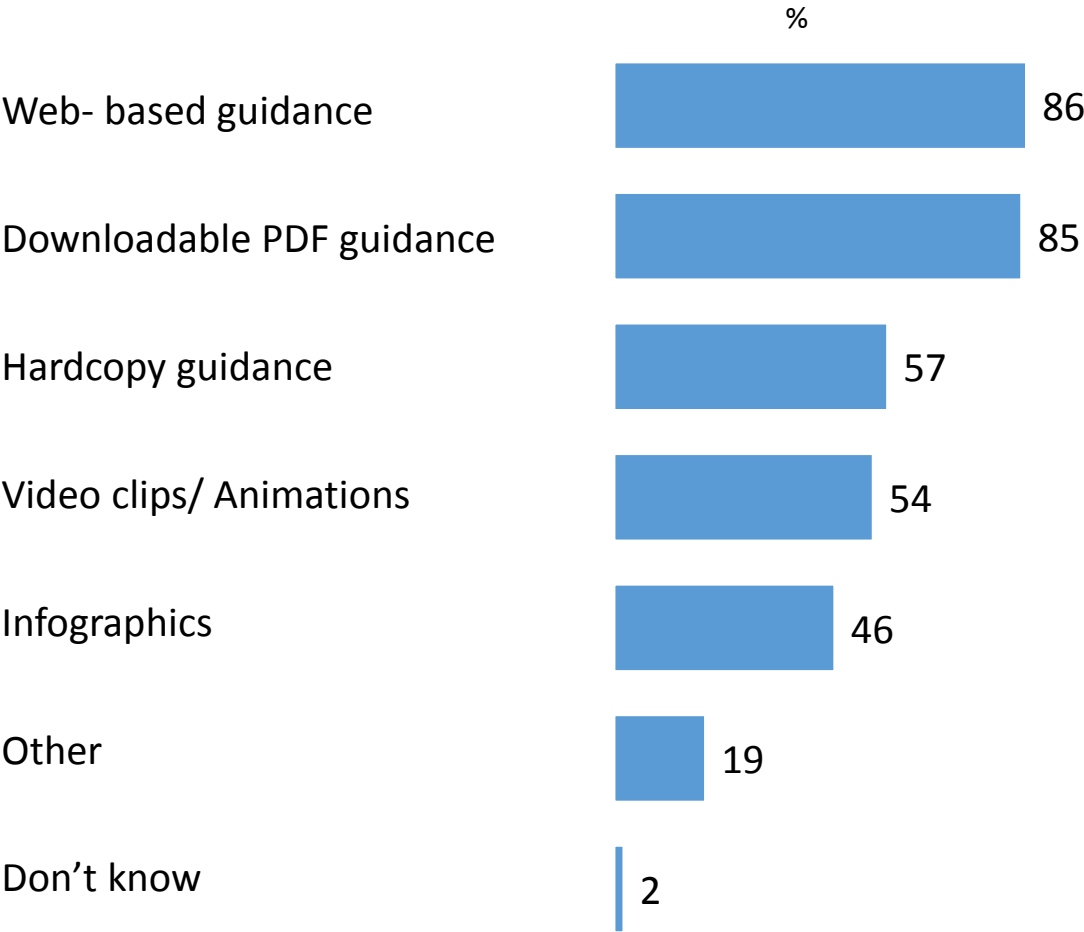


Q.15 If yes, what type of service provider are you using?

Consulting firms (35%) or an unspecified other external service provider (35%) were the most frequently mentioned external service providers by those using an external resource.

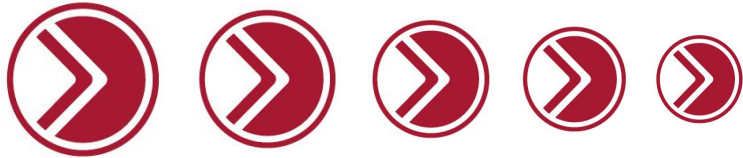
...and the majority of SMEs are interested in web-based and downloadable guidance.

(Base: All respondents - 500)



Q.19 What format of guidance would you find most helpful to your preparations for the General Data Protection Regulation?

Insights and Implications



Key Findings – Core themes

- The majority of SMEs are aware that they **collect personal data**;
 - Yet, most SMEs have not assessed this data, or why they gather it and for how long they keep it.
- The majority of SMEs say that they are **aware of data laws** and over two thirds have heard of the GDPR;
 - Although **less than half are aware that changes to data laws are imminent** and less than one third are aware GDPR will be in effect in 2018.
- As a result, **only one in five** have **identified actions** to take to comply with the GDPR or **can name any changes** the GDPR will mean for their business;
 - One quarter of SMEs don't know when they will begin their GDPR plan but this rises to over a third of those who have not heard of the GDPR or are unaware that changes are imminent.
- Overall, **medium enterprises** (50-249 employees) have a **greater awareness** of data law and the forthcoming changes as a result of the GDPR.
 - Medium enterprises are also more likely to have a preparation plan in place.
- SMEs which have heard of the GDPR or that are aware that changes to data law are imminent are **more likely to have assessed their data and be prepared** for the GDPR.
 - As a result it appears crucial to ensure that SMEs become aware of the GDPR and that these changes are imminent.
 - This is particularly the case for micro-enterprises.
 - Resources to help SMEs prepare would be welcomed with SMEs particularly interested in web-based and downloadable guidance.

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