We do not use ‘cookies’ on our websites at all but we do you use ‘Session Variables’.  Session variables let you store and display information maintained for the **duration** of a user’s visit (or session). The server creates a different session object for each user and maintains it for a set period of time or until the object is explicitly terminated.

**How session variables work.**

Session variables store information (usually form or URL parameters submitted by users) and make it available to all of a web application’s pages for the duration of the user’s visit. For example: when users log on to a web portal that provides access to e‑mail, stock quotes, weather reports, and daily news, the web application stores the login information in a session variable that identifies the user throughout the site’s pages. This allows the user to see only the types of content they have selected as they navigate through the site. Session variables can also provide a safety mechanism by terminating the user’s session if the account remains inactive for a certain period of time. This also frees server memory and processing resources if the user forgets to log off a website.

**Session variables store information for the life of the use session**. The session begins when the user opens a page within the application and ends when the user does not open another page in the application for a certain period of time, or when the user explicitly terminates the session (typically by clicking a “log-off” link). While it exists, the session is specific to an individual user, and every user has a separate session.

Use session variables to store information that every page in a web application can access. The information can be as diverse as the user’s name, preferred font size, or a flag indicating whether the user has successfully logged in. Another common use of session variables is to keep a running tally, such as the number of questions answered correctly so far in an online quiz, or the products the user selected so far from an online catalogue.

Session variables can only function if the user’s browser is configured to accept cookies. The server creates a session ID number that uniquely identifies the user when the session is first initiated, then sends a cookie containing the ID number to the user’s browser. When the user requests another page on the server, the server reads the cookie in the browser to identify the user and to retrieve the user’s session variables stored in the server’s memory.

Server variables do not therefore leave a ‘cookie’ on your system.

The new rules will therefore not apply to your website.

The new requirement is essentially that cookies can only be placed on machines where the user or subscriber has given their consent.

(1) Subject to paragraph (4), a person shall not store or gain access to information stored, in the terminal equipment of a subscriber or user unless the requirements of paragraph (2) are met.

(2) The requirements are that the subscriber or user of that terminal equipment--
(a) is provided with clear and comprehensive information about the purposes of the storage of, or access to, that information; and
(b) has given his or her consent.  (*continued*)

(3) Where an electronic communications network is used by the same person to store or access information in the terminal equipment of a subscriber or user on more than one occasion, it is sufficient for the purposes of this regulation that the requirements of paragraph (2)
are met in respect of the initial use.

“(3A) For the purposes of paragraph (2), consent may be signified by a subscriber who amends or sets controls on the internet browser which the subscriber uses or by using another application or programme to signify consent.

(4) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the technical storage of, or
access to, information--
(a) for the sole purpose of carrying out the transmission of a communication over an electronic communications network; or
(b) where such storage or access is strictly necessary for the provision of an information society service requested by the subscriber or user.