

Your Personal Information and how we use it.

Sunderland City Council's Benefits Service needs to collect information about you to help us provide you with the best possible service and advice in calculating your benefits entitlement.

We will only use information collected lawfully in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will not use any information we hold about you for any purpose other than that for which it was collected, unless we have obtained your consent beforehand.

What information do we collect?

We collect information about you, your household composition and your financial circumstances. This enables us to calculate your entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. This information may be recorded in writing, or electronically on a computer, or a mixture of both.

The type of information we will or may collect:-

- Personal information (such as name, date of birth, national insurance number, address, email address and telephone numbers)
- Financial Details (all income, capital and expenditure where relevant)
- Banking Information
- Rent and Council Tax Details
- Household Composition
- Appointee Information
- Medical conditions, where appropriate
- Information from Government Departments like the Department for Work and Pensions and
- Information from HMCTS (Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service)
- Information from VTS (Valuation Tribunal Service)
- Information from Employers
- Information from HMRC (Inland Revenue)
- Information from Landlords and Social Housing providers

How is the information we collect used to help you?

The information we collect may be used to help you in the following ways:

- Calculate and pay Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support
- Identify any additional benefits you may be entitled to

Do we share information about you with anyone?

There are times when it will be appropriate for us to share relevant information with other agencies to help us work together for your benefit. We may share your information with the following main partners, and they may share it with us to support your application:

- DWP
- Landlords and Social Housing providers
- Government Departments like the Department for Work and Pensions
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service
- Local Authorities
- Banks and Organisations that may lend you money, if the law allows this
- Independent Accountancy Firm
- Valuation Office Agency
- Employers
- Credit Reference Agencies

We do not share information about you with anyone without your consent unless the law requires or allows us to do so. We will always seek your positive consent to share information if there is no legal basis to share.

Please note that your personal data eg name, address etc may also be shared with bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds for the purposes of preventing and detecting fraud eg data is shared with the Cabinet Office as part of the government's National Fraud Initiative (NFI), in an exercise undertaken periodically that seeks to match electronic data for the specific purpose of preventing and detecting fraud.

For more details see the Council's National Fraud Initiative Privacy Notice at www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/15536/Privacy

In all cases where we must pass on information, we will only share the minimum amount of information required and will use the most secure method to transfer; wherever possible data will be pseudonymised (i.e. does not identify you personally) or encrypted.

The lawful basis on which we use this information

We need to collect and use your personal data in order to calculate entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, and to comply with the provisions of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Our lawful basis for processing is :

- the data subject has given consent to the processing of his or her personal data for one or more specific purposes as defined by Article 6(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR),
- we need to comply with our statutory obligations as defined by Article 6(1)(c) of the GDPR,
- we are carrying out a task in the public interest as defined by Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR.

Some of the information we may need to hold is classed as special category information - primarily ethnicity and any health conditions. Our lawful basis for processing this data is provided by Article 9(2)(b) of GDPR - processing is necessary to carry out our obligations in the field of social security.

How we look after your information

All information is held securely with physical, organisational and electronic access controls to ensure it is secure both at rest and when in transit. Some information is processed under contract on our behalf by TransUnion - further information on TransUnion is available [here](#).

How long we will look after your information

We will keep information in line with Sunderland City Council's [Retention Schedule](#) for the Benefits Service, and we will only keep it as long as we need it. When we no longer need your information it will be destroyed securely by deletion of electronic records and shredding of paper files.

Requesting access to your personal data

You can find out if we hold any personal information about you by making a 'subject access request' under the General Data Protection Regulation.

In addition, you have the right to request the rectification or erasure of your personal data, and to object to, or request restriction of, processing your data.

If you have any concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal information, we request that you raise your concern with us in the first instance.

Alternatively, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Further information

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/data-protection>

Contact Us

Data Protection Officer, Sunderland City Council, Civic Centre, Sunderland SR2 7DN

Email: Data.Protection@sunderland.gov.uk

Tel: 0191 5205555