

Your guide to data protection

Data protection legislation (Data Protection Act 1998) sets out what information can be held by organisations about individuals, and how this information is handled.

We recognise that customers, service users, partners, employees, and Board members have a right to privacy and to expect that all personal information held about them will be handled sensitively, confidentially, and in accordance with the law.

This guide sets out the ways in which we handle information about you, and your rights in respect of that information.

The information we hold and how we obtain it

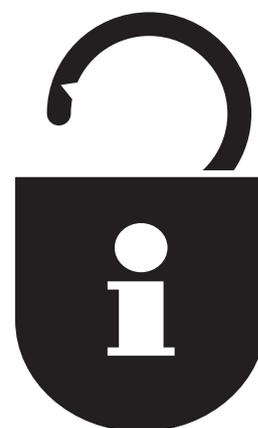
Generally, we receive information about you when you apply to us for housing, and from third parties such as the local authority housing department, referral agencies who are supporting your application, previous landlords stated on your application form, or your GP where medical confirmation is required to support your application.

In some cases we may (with your consent) contact the police or social services to find out if they have information about you which they should disclose under the Crime and Disorder Act. This is done to protect our tenants against the threat of crime or anti-social behaviour.

What we do with the information

Provision of services

- ▶ To administer and maintain records about your tenancy.
- ▶ To ensure that the service we offer you continues to be the most appropriate for your needs.
- ▶ If you live in sheltered or supported accommodation we will keep records that you have given us about your medical conditions, your GP, next of kin and other support networks to enable us to assist in the co-ordination of support services, and will pass copies of these records to suppliers of any Community Alarm Services.



- ▶ If your tenancy is managed by another landlord or agent on our behalf, we will pass information about you to them to enable them to provide housing management services and meet their management agreements with us.
- ▶ To respond to any query that you may have about your tenancy or your rent account.
- ▶ To update our systems for enhanced service provision to you.
- ▶ We will share your details with our contractors and other agencies that provide a service on our behalf.

Other purposes

- ▶ Disclose information about you to third parties under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act.
- ▶ Disclose information about your tenancy to the Housing Benefits department.
- ▶ Disclose information about you to collection agencies and legal representatives for the purpose of collecting rents or other money you owe to us.
- ▶ To enable us to consult you and keep you informed by post, telephone or text or email, or by any other form of electronic media of services or products provided by us.
- ▶ Use information about you for the purposes of research and statistical analysis.
- ▶ Use information about you and your rent account for internal customer service monitoring.
- ▶ Disclose information about you to regulatory authorities in response to formal requests.

- ▶ Disclose information about you in response to legislative or court orders.
- ▶ We may periodically send promotional material by email or text signposting you to, but not limited to, new products, events, roadshows or job fairs that we are organising.

Caring for your data

We will keep sensitive information held about you secure, and ensure that our data security is appropriate to the nature of the information we are holding and the harm that might result from a breach of security.

We will:

- ▶ Not hold information about you which is excessive in relation to the purpose(s) for which it is processed.
- ▶ Keep any information about you accurate and up-to-date. To help us to do this, please keep us informed if any of your details change.
- ▶ Not keep data for any purpose(s) longer than is necessary. We may retain records of your tenancy for a time after it has ended to enable us to resolve any subsequent queries and comply with legislative requirements.
- ▶ Process your information in accordance with your rights under the Data Protection Act.

Your rights

You have the following rights under the Data Protection Act in relation to the information that we hold about you:

- ▶ To access personal data held about you. You may apply to see personal data held about you by letter or email or by completing a Subject Access Request form, which is available from our offices.
- ▶ You may request details of the information that we hold about you and the purpose(s) for which it is held. We will provide the information, in a permanent form, as at the time of the request, subject to any routine processing continuing between that time and the time of response. We will make a small charge to cover our administration costs and the cost of photocopying of £10.
- ▶ It is a legal requirement that we give you the information you requested within 40 calendar days of receiving your request to do so. You will be asked to prove your identity before being granted access to personal data held about you.
- ▶ To write to us to require us to stop (or to not begin) processing personal data on the grounds that it is causing, or is likely to cause, substantial damage or distress to you or to another and that damage or distress is, or would be, unwarranted.

This right does not apply where:

- ▶ you have consented to the processing
- ▶ the processing is necessary for entering into, or for the performance of, a contract
- ▶ the processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation,
or
- ▶ the processing is necessary to protect your vital interests

To consider such a request you will need to provide us with supporting evidence (where appropriate) to substantiate your grounds. We will, in any event, respond to such a request within 21 calendar days stating the steps we will take to comply with your request, or our reasons why we do not consider it necessary to comply.

To write to us to require us to ensure that no decision taken by, or on behalf of, us and which significantly affects you is based solely on the automated processing of your information. No such arrangements currently exist within the organisation.

FACT
SHEET

The Information Commissioner



If you wish to know more about your rights in respect of protection of personal data, you should write to:

**The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House,
Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.**

**T. 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745
www.ico.gov.uk**