

Housing Benefits

Privacy Notice (How we use your information)

The categories of information that we collect, process, hold and share include:

- personal information (such as name, address, contact information, gender, National Insurance number and bank account details)
- characteristics (such as ethnicity, language, nationality, and disability)
- medical information & details of disabilities
- Income information (such as rent, pensions, benefits and earned income)
- financial information (such as details of expenditure and one off payments and receipts) Bank details if payment is made direct?
- identification (such as photographs, driving licences, passports)
- Immigration status & other proof of eligibility
- other personal information that will vary on a case by case basis to enable us to undertake our assessments including other household members, dependents etc

Why we collect and use this information

We use your data to:

- enable us to carry out specific functions for which we are responsible
- enable us to assess your application for housing benefit, discretionary housing payments
- derive statistics which inform decisions such as processing times for new claims and changes of circumstances
- take any necessary enforcement action
- provide statistics to Government departments e.g. DWP
- inform and plan resourcing activities

The lawful basis on which we use this information

We collect and use this information in order to carry out statutory functions under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and from that there are two regulations that help its operation, the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 for working age claimants and the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 for those of pension age.

Collecting this information

The information you provide to us is on a voluntary basis however it is processed in order to calculate your entitlement to housing benefit which is a statutory function. In order to comply with the data protection legislation, we will inform you whether you are required to provide certain information to us or if you have a choice in this.

Storing this information

We hold your data for up to six years after your claim with us has ended, we may, however, if required hold your data for longer in order to support any debt recovery action.

Who we share this information with

We routinely share information with:

- Our Revenues & Benefits contractor Northgate Public Services and any agency staff working on our behalf
- With other departments within the Council such as Council Tax, Housing, Customer Services, Internal Audit, Fraud Team,
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other Government departments as required
- External auditors
- Collection Agents (where applicable)
- Credit Reference Agencies
- The Cabinet Office as part of the National Fraud Initiative

Why we share this information

We share data with DWP on a statutory basis under the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992. This data sharing enables the DWP to monitor whether we are performing our statutory duties and how we are performing compared to the rest of the country.

We share data with Northgate Public Services to enable us to fulfil our statutory duties with regards to Housing Benefit.

We share data internally and with Credit Reference Agencies in order to protect public funds and to prevent and detect any fraudulent activity.

We share data with the Cabinet Office as we are required to by law for the purpose of assisting the prevention and detection of fraud

Data collection requirements

To find out more about the data collection requirements placed on us by the DWP go to www.gov.uk.

Requesting access to your personal data

Under data protection legislation, you have the right to request access to information about them that we hold. To make a request for your personal information please contact Adrian Stanfield, the Council's Data Protection Officer at foi@tmbc.gov.uk.

You also have the right to:

- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing
- object to decisions being taken by automated means
- in certain circumstances, have personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed; and
- claim compensation for damages caused by a breach of the Data Protection regulations

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, 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

If you would like further information about this privacy notice, please contact Adrian Stanfield, the Council's Data Protection Officer at foi@tmbc.gov.uk.

The Council collects and uses personal information for a number of purposes across all of its departments and functions. To find out more about how the Council uses the personal information it collects, please refer to the Corporate Privacy Notice <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/privacy-notice>