

YOUR GUIDE TO DATA PROTECTION



By providing Your Housing Group with your personal information, you help us to administer your tenancy or lease with us. It also allows us to identify the services you may need.

Personal information

Personal information (or data) is information that relates to a living individual who can be identified from that information. This can be your name, date of birth, contact details amongst other things which you may have given to us e.g. on forms that you may have completed or during a telephone call. The use of personal information is guided by the Data Protection Act 1998.

Keeping your confidence

We take the confidentiality of your data very seriously. When you give us your personal data, we promise we will:

- Keep the information up-to-date and secure
- Only keep it as long we need to, and destroy old information that we no longer need, in line with our policies
- Only collect data that is relevant to our purposes, such as supporting you and administering your tenancy
- Only let people have access to your data who need to
- Tell you when we use any information for monitoring purposes

Seeing your data

When you ask to see data we hold about you, this is called a subject access request. The Data Protection Act entitles you to see all the data held about you, unless:

- It could affect the detecting or preventing of crime
- It could affect the catching or prosecuting of offenders
- It could affect the assessment or collection of taxes or duty
- The personal data includes information that could identify a third party, or comments or opinions from a third party who has not given their permission to disclose it. Where this is the case, we will take a view about whether or not it's reasonable in the circumstances to provide you with the information

Please note that certain manual filing systems are exempt from the Data Protection Act, mainly those kept in date order and not indexed to allow fast retrieval.

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Your rights

The Data Protection Act gives you certain rights over the information an organisation holds and processes about you. You have the following rights under the Act:

1. The right of subject access - this means you can ask to see all the data an organisation holds on you. The request must be made in writing, and usually the payment of a £10 fee is required. We will ask for proof of ID to make sure that we know who you are before we disclose any information. Data includes digital and computerised information, some manual records, photographs, CCTV footage, video and audiotapes.
2. In some circumstances you can prevent someone from processing (keeping and using) your personal data if it would harm or distress you.
3. You can stop an organisation using your personal data for direct marketing - for example, trying to sell you something by phone, post or email.
4. You can object to decisions that have been made by a completely automated process.
5. At Your Housing Group, a person is always involved in making the decisions that affect you. We do not use any completely automated processes.
6. You have the right to compensation for any damage and distress caused by a breach of the Data Protection Act.
7. You can ask the court to order an organisation to rectify, delete or destroy any personal details that are inaccurate or express opinions based on wrong information.
8. If you believe your personal information has not been processed in line with the Data Protection Act, then firstly contact us. If you believe that we have not dealt with the enquiry to your satisfaction, you can ask the Information Commissioner (ICO) to investigate and assess the matter.

Sharing your information with others

We sometimes need to disclose your personal data to other organisations. However, we won't share your information unless you have consented or unless we're allowed to by law. For example:

- If we have a legal duty to do so
- To utility companies (gas, electric etc.) when you have signed up for a tenancy
- To provide references to a letting agent (if we need to do this we will tell you, as well as the agent, what information we are disclosing and why)
- If you are in arrears and leave without paying or arranging to pay, we may give your details to a tracing or debt collection agent to try to recover our money
- We will give your contact details to a contractor if your home needs a repair - we do this for all repairs so that the contractor can contact you direct
- If you are on housing benefit and your circumstances change, we will notify the local council
- To prevent or detect crime or breaches of tenancy agreements
- Where we have outsourced work, such as surveys. If we outsource work we will make sure that we have a written agreement in place with the external organisation, which will give us assurance that your data will be kept safe and only used for the purposes we specify

For more information concerning how we use your personal data contact Your Response on **0345 345 0272**

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act applies to most public bodies and means you can request various types of information from them. Your Housing Group is not a public body as defined by the Act, so the Freedom of Information Act does not apply to us. As such, we don't have to disclose information under it. However, we will consider particular requests for information and tell you how to get it if we can.