

## **Who we are?**

### **Watford Borough Council (WBC)**

WBC is the data controller under the Data Protection Legislation as we collect and process personal information about your tenant(s) in order to provide Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support services, Council Tax, Housing Benefits Overpayment and whilst also meeting our statutory obligations.

This notice explains why we ask for your tenant(s) personal information, how that information will be used and how you can access your records.

Any questions regarding our privacy practices should be sent to:

Data Protection Officer (DPO)  
Legal Services, Resources  
Hertfordshire County Council  
County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DE

Postal Point: CHO150

Email: [watfordDP@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:watfordDP@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01992 588099

### **What do we use the information for?**

We use personal information to enable us to award housing benefits and Council tax reduction. Housing benefit and council tax support are both means tested benefits, therefore we are required to collect personal and financial information on your tenant(s) and to verify and determine eligibility.

#### **We use personal information:**

- To confirm rental liability
- To verify who the correct person should be liable for council tax.
- To verify identity.
- To collect any overpaid housing benefit
- To consider any reconsiderations and appeals where you do not agree with your tenant(s) award of housing benefit/council tax support

#### **What information do we hold and use?**

- We collect and process the following information:
- Your tenant(s) personal details, which include full name, date of birth, National Insurance numbers and any member of their household.

- Your tenant(s) current, previous and future addresses where known
- The date your tenant(s) wishes to claim from and if they wish to claim housing benefit and/or council tax support
- Any contact/appointee details – name and contact address
- All household members full name, date of birth and National Insurance numbers
- Any legal proceedings that you may have against your tenant(s), such as a Sections 21/8
- Details of your bank account if Housing Benefits is paid directly to you.
- Rent account reference numbers
- End of tenancy notices
- Evidence of the rent you charge, private or social tenancies
- Details of death of tenant or family member.
- Information relating to rent arrears for your tenant(s), such as rent statements.
- Immigration status where known, so that we can determine eligibility
- To find out if tenant(s) is resident or have been absent for more than 28 days

### **On what grounds do we use the information?**

The provisions governing housing benefit are contained in regulations made by the Secretary of State for Social Security and laid before Parliament.

The primary legislation covering council tax and housing benefit is contained in the:

- Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) for Council Tax
- Council Tax Administration and Enforcement Regulations 1992
- Social Security Administration Act 1992 (consolidating act) as amended
- Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 (consolidating act) as amended.
- Section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992 applies to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012.

Processing of personal information is carried out in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

### **How do we collect this information?**

Information is collected from you regarding your tenant(s) as listed below:

- Paper claim forms
- Online claim forms
- Evidence and data obtain by way of a visiting officer
- By post/email/website
- Reporting changes online
- Over the telephone through our Contact Centre staff

### **Who do we share your information with?**

We never make your tenant (s) personal details available to companies outside of Watford Borough Council for marketing purposes, although our representatives may hold the data so that the details and/or order can be processed and/or account maintained, or for the recovery of outstanding monies.

Information held by Housing Benefits is used by other departments of Watford Borough Council to enable them to undertake their statutory duties where the law allows it. We will not disclose with anyone else without appropriate permission, unless we have a legal reason to do so. For example disclosure may be necessary to prevent or detect crime.

We will obtain other information about your tenant(s) from third parties and give information to them to:

- make sure the information is accurate
- prevent, detect and prosecute fraud
- protect public funds
- recover debts owed to the council
- make sure the information is accurate

These third parties include:

- Government Departments for verification of benefits, detection and prevention of fraud and request to attach overpaid housing benefit to welfare benefits, to submit appeals against housing benefit/council tax support and valuation office agency
- HMRC to obtain employment details
- Enforcement Agents, previously known as Bailiffs
- Credit Reference Agencies
- Other local Authorities to share relevant information for administering housing benefit, for fraud and verification
- Private-sector organisations such as banks and organisations
- Any organisation who the Council contracts with to administer public funds
- External stakeholders such as Citizens Advice Bureau where a referral is to be made on your tenant (s) behalf and consent has been received.

### **How long do we store it and is it secure?**

We will only keep your tenant(s) information for the minimum period necessary. The information outlined in this privacy notice will be kept after all action on your tenant(s) claim has finished and the period required by the council for legal and audit purposes has passed. All information will be held securely and destroyed under confidential conditions. For more information please visit [https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/774/watford\\_borough\\_council\\_retention\\_policy](https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/774/watford_borough_council_retention_policy)

**Providing accurate information**

It is important that we hold accurate and up to date information about your tenant(s) in order to assess their needs and deliver the appropriate services. If any of your tenant(s) details have changed, or change in the future, please ensure that you tell us as soon as possible so that we can update your tenant(s) records.

**Your rights**

You have certain rights under UK Data Protection law including:

- The right to be informed
- The right of rectification (to have any inaccuracies corrected)
- The right of erasure (to have your records deleted)
- The right to restrict processing
- The right to object

Further information about your rights and your tenant(s) rights is available on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

If you have a concern about the way that we are collecting or using your information or your tenant(s) personal data, we ask that you contact us in the first instance. Alternatively, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

**Changes to this Privacy Notice**

We reserve the right to update this privacy notice at any time, and we will provide you with a new privacy notice when we make any substantial updates. We may also notify you in other ways from time to time about the processing of your personal information. This Privacy was last updated in January 2019.