

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 you in order to provide Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support services, collection of Business Rates, Council Tax, Housing Benefits Overpayment and Sundry Debts, and to support the making of Covid-19 self-isolation payments whilst also meeting our statutory obligations.

This notice explains why we ask for your 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)

Hertfordshire County Council

Pegs Lane

Hertford

Email: WatfordDP@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01992 5883

What do we use the information for?

We use personal information for the collection of business rates, council tax, housing benefits overpayment and sundry debts, and also to administer housing benefit and council tax support on behalf of Central Government. We also use personal information to make payments to those eligible as a result of needing to self-isolate as a result of Covid19. Housing benefit and council tax support are both means tested benefits, therefore we are required to collect personal and financial information on you and your household to verify and determine eligibility. We use personal information:

- To register for Business Rates and Council Tax
- To confirm that any discount, exemptions or relief is applied correctly
- To verify you and your partner's identity and National Insurance number under Section 19 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992
- to verify evidence regarding income and capital to calculate your entitlement to housing benefit/council tax support and free school meals
- to collect any overpaid housing benefit
- to consider any reconsiderations and appeals where you do not agree with your award of housing benefit/council tax support
- to assist you with benefit and debt advice.

What information do we hold and use?

We collect and process the following information:

- You and your partner's personal details, which include full name, date of birth, National Insurance numbers
- Your current, previous and future addresses
- Your telephone numbers, email address
- The date you wish to claim from and if you 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
- Details of all income you and your household receive, this could be information you have provided or information we have collected directly from the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs which includes all state benefits and employment information
- Details of all bank accounts you hold
- Details of any second properties and rent received from the properties if applicable
- Details of any expenses, such as child care costs, payments to private pensions
- Evidence of the rent you are charged regarding private or social tenancies
- Details of the bank account that housing benefit is to be paid to
- Information relating to rent arrears from your landlord, such as rent statements
- Documents relating to your right to reside if your nationality is not British National
- Name, address and bank details for private landlords/3rd party payee's where payment of housing benefit is made to them
- Notification of Debt Relief Orders (DRO), Bankruptcy and Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVA)
- Details of your council tax liability.
- Details received from Public Health England to make Covid 19 self-isolation payments regarding you or a third party you have had close contact with has Covid 19 so that you need to self-isolate and your eligibility for such a payment.

On what grounds do we use the information?

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

- Non-Domestic (Business Rates) Regulations 1988
- 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.
- The provisions governing housing benefit are contained in regulations made by the Secretary of State for Social Security and laid before Parliament. The regulations covering housing benefit are the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.

- Section 13A of the Local Government Act 1992 applies to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012.
- Regulation 3(4) of the Health Service Control of Patient Information Regulations 2002

Processing of personal information is carried out in accordance with 1a, 1c and 1e of Article 6 of the EU GDPR.

How do we collect this information?

Information is collected from the individual or from a third party as listed below:

- Paper claim forms
- Online claim forms
- Claim forms completed in assistance from a member of staff within Watford WBC
- Evidence and data obtain by way of a visiting officer
- By post/email/website
- Reporting changes online
- Direct from the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Over the telephone through our Contact Centre staff
- Through the national Tell Us Once Scheme
- From an employer
- Registered Social landlords via post of email or our Landlord Portal
- Through an internal department.
- Direct from Public Health England

Who do we share your information with?

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

Information held by the Revenues & 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 you 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

- match the information you provide with other information we hold about you whether provided to us by you, or anyone else. We may also obtain other information about you from third parties and give information to them to:
- make sure the information is accurate
- prevent, detect and prosecute fraud
- protect public funds.

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 that may lend you money
- your landlord to determine direct payment of housing benefit following an arrears or vulnerability request
- Any organisation who the Council contracts with to administer public funds
- Schools to determine eligibility for free school meals
- External stakeholders such as Citizens Advice Bureau where a referral is to be made on your behalf and consent has been received.
- Public Health England

How long do we store it and is it secure?

We will only keep your information for the minimum period necessary. The information outlined in this privacy notice will be kept after all action on your 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. A copy of the Council's retention policy can be viewed [here](#)

Providing accurate information

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

Your rights

You have certain rights under UK Data Protection law including:

- The right to be informed
- The right of access to your personal data

- 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 data portability
- The right to object
- Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

Further information about your rights is available on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office www.ico.org.uk

If you have a concern about the way that we are collecting or using your 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 October 2020.