

Service: Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Data Controller: Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH

Data Protection Officer: Natalie Lacey, dpo@runnymede.gov.uk

Introduction

We collect and process personal data relating to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support to in order to provide financial support to those eligible. The organisation is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations.

What information do we collect?

We collect and process a range of information about you. This includes:

- your name, address and contact details, including email address and telephone number (you do not have to provide this, but it may make it easier to resolve any issues)
- financial information such as bank details, records of income and savings
- your national insurance number and evidence of identity
- your nationality and immigration status
- your date of birth
- your marital status and who you live with
- your gender
- your employment status and information about your employment
- information on your property such as the amount of rent you are paying
- health data, if relevant to your claim

The organisation collects this information in a variety of ways. For example, it may be supplied by you when filling out a form or calling our customer services department.

Why do we process personal data?

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support assessments are made either using regulations laid down by the Government or in accordance with a local scheme agreed by the Council. We will not be able to assess any entitlement without the personal data you provide us with.

We also collect and use your contact details to communicate with you about your assessments and entitlements. This is not a legal requirement and is done with your consent.

Who has access to your data?

Your information may need to be shared with the parties set out below for the purposes stated above.

- your landlord, your employer or your pension provider (in order to confirm information that you have given us if you are unable to provide the proof yourself)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Cabinet Office (National Fraud Initiative)
- HM Revenue & Customs
- Other council departments such as Finance. (If you have a benefit overpayment please see the “Sundry Debtors and Housing Benefit Overpayment Privacy Notice”)
- Commissioned partners including Northgate
- The Police – for the prevention and detection of crime

We require all third parties to respect the security of your personal data and to treat it in accordance with the law. We do not allow our third-party service providers to use your personal data for their own purposes and only permit them to process your personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with our instructions and data protection laws. They are also obliged to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security of data.

We will not transfer your data to countries outside the European Economic Area.

How do we protect data?

The organisation takes the security of your data seriously. The organisation has internal policies and controls in place to try to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed, and is not accessed except by its employees in the performance of their duties. Data will only be processed by members of staff authorised by the Data Controller for this purpose. Access to our systems is limited to authorised members of the Customer Service, Housing Benefit and Housing teams whose job role requires access to the personal data.

How long do we keep your data?

We keep all records relating to benefits for as long as you have a live and ongoing claim with us. Even if your claim is closed, we will keep your Housing Benefit records for the current financial year and for the six financial years following the year that your claim is closed. For Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Support purposes, we will keep details of the property or properties and dates for which you received financial support. This is in case there is a change to the Council Tax Band of the property that affects the amount of eligible assistance. Council Tax re-banding can be backdated back to 1 April 1993 and the band can increase or decrease.

Your rights

As a data subject, you have a number of rights. You can:

- access and obtain a copy of your data on request (known as a subject access request);
- require us to change incorrect or incomplete data;
- ask us to delete or stop processing your data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing. Where possible we will seek to comply with your request, but we may be required to hold or process information to comply with a legal requirement.
- object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances. We may still be required to hold or process information if there are legitimate grounds for doing so.

You can make a subject access request by following the instructions for making a subject access request on our website:

<https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/article/14634/Can-I-ask-for-personal-information-about-myself->

Or you can contact our Information Governance Officer on 01932 425626

If you believe that Runnymede Borough Council has not complied with your data protection rights, you should initially contact our Data Protection Officer and if dissatisfied with the outcome you can make a complaint to the Information Commissioner.

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>