



Privacy Notice for – Revenues and Benefits Service

Why we are collecting your data

Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council are data controllers and collect your personal data to enable you to access the Revenues and Benefits service that is available to you. We will only collect the personal data from you that we need to provide this service to you.

Information collected to process your claim

Information that we collect is likely to have been provided by yourself, but we may also collect information from your landlord or property agent. Your information may be referred to us by a third party such as The Department for Work and Pensions and the Pension Service, welfare advice agency or another service area within the council.

What we do with your personal information?

We are using your personal information for the purpose of administering Benefits (including Housing Benefit, council tax reduction, discretionary housing payment, exceptional hardship fund applications and recovering Housing Benefit overpayments). We may also use your contact details and case history to communicate with you when we are consulting on, or implementing, changes to the council tax reduction working-age scheme in accordance with our obligations under the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

We will use your data in profiling to help to inform us of where additional local welfare support funding for low-income families, such as administration of the Household Support Fund, the Council's hardship funds, the Council's action on poverty funding should be utilised. In addition, we will use your data to help inform policies and work we are completing under our Poverty Strategy.

When using your data for informing policies and targeted support, your data will be anonymised. As a result of this you could be allocated a payment from welfare funds. If you would like us to review any automated decision made, or you would like your details removed from the dataset we use, you can contact us at customerfirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

What personal data will we be collecting?

We will only collect the personal data from you that we need in order to provide this service to you:

The information will include:

- Details about you such as your name, address, telephone number, email address, National Insurance number, date of birth
- Details about your household composition, income, allowances, savings and investments, including those of a partner, non-dependents or any dependents
- Other relevant information needed to process your claim e.g. landlord details

Why we need your information

The administration of benefits will include various activities to ensure the accuracy and timelines of benefit payments such as calculation of entitlement; processing of payment files; internal and external audits; system maintenance; and quality assurance checks. Some benefit decisions may be made through automated processes, such as yearly rent increases.

Who do we gather information from?

When assessing eligibility for support we may also obtain information about you, your household, your employment and income details from the Department for Work and Pensions, His Majesty's Revenues and Customs, the Home Office, The Pension Service, employers, Landlords and agents and other service areas of the Council.

Who will your information be shared with?

Your personal information will be available to be seen by those within the Revenues and Benefits team for the purpose of assessing and administering your application, recovering any Housing Benefit overpayments and by our support services (such as the Legal and Finance Teams and third party payment handler) where necessary to carry out the purpose and supporting functions such as payment of housing benefit to your bank account. Your data will be provided to internal service areas including Housing, Electoral Services, Environmental Health and Council Tax for the purpose of carrying out our regulatory functions and legal obligations including those under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Environmental Protection Act and for the purpose of identifying and preventing fraud.

The Council hold a customer of concern policy which is shared with frontline staff if staff safety is viewed as being at risk.

Information may also be shared with partner agencies during safeguarding investigations; for fraud identification and prevention; and in relation to our prevention duty pursuant to the Counter Terrorism Act and associated legislation.

Externally, we may share information about you with other billing authorities for the purpose of recovering debt; this includes we may also share your information with the Child Support Agency, DWP, NFI, credit reference companies; HM Courts and Tribunal Services and HMRC for the purposes of assessing liability and for fraud identification and prevention.

Your claim information is processed by external printers acting on the council's behalf and is scanned by our IT company.

With your consent, we may also share financial information with the Council's financial resilience team for the purpose of preventing homelessness and providing financial resilience support and access to discretionary funding from Local Welfare Funding and our Private Sector Housing team for the purpose of assessing eligibility for energy efficiency support. Your contact information may also be shared with local foodbanks, and other partners providing resilience support.

We may also discuss your application with your landlord where authorised, by you, or where regulations require us to do so. Information about debts owed by you to the Council may be provided to the Insolvency service in response to requests received under The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

Your personal information will be stored securely and will not be accessible to anyone else, including other services within the Council, unless detailed above.

To ensure our record keeping is efficient and to be able to provide services quickly across Lewes and Eastbourne we hold your personal information in a centralised customer record.

We may check information provided by you, or information about you provided by a third party, with other information we hold. We may also get information from third parties, or give information to them to check the accuracy of information, this is to prevent or detect crime, or to protect public funds, if the law allows it. These third parties include the Police and government departments such as Immigration.

We may also share information with other bodies that are responsible for auditing or administering public funds, including the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office requires councils to participate in data matching exercises to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. Councils are required to provide particular sets of data to the Cabinet Office for this purpose and cannot refuse to hand over this data.

Where we need to disclose sensitive information such as medical details to a third party, we will do so once we have obtained your explicit consent, or where we are legally required to. We may disclose information when necessary to prevent risk of harm to an individual.

What is the legal basis for processing this data?

- The legal basis we rely on to process your personal data is article 6(1)(c) of the UK GDPR. The processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation
- If we need to process special category data this will only be processed in accordance with Article 9 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- obligation and public task under the Social Security Administration Act 1992, Housing Benefit General Regulations 2006 (as amended), Housing Benefit (persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 (as amended),
- Welfare Reform Act 2012, The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001,
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy, and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2013 (as amended).

We will not

- Use your information for marketing or sales purposes without your prior explicit consent.
- Send or store your data outside of the UK

How long will we hold your data for?

All your personal information will be held by us only for as long as is necessary and then in accordance with the Council's retention schedule. For more information please go to our website to view our retention policy.

Your rights

You are entitled to request a copy of any information about you that we hold.

If the information we hold about you is inaccurate you have a right to have this corrected and you have the right to request completion of incomplete data.

You have the right to request that we stop, or restrict the processing of your personal data, in certain circumstances. 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.

If you are dissatisfied with how the councils have used your personal information you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at casework@ico.org.uk

Identity of the Data Protection Officer

Data Protection Officer – Oliver Dixon, Senior Lawyer

Contact details

Lewes and Eastbourne Councils, Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG

Email: accesstoinformation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Tel: 01323 410000