



# Northumberland County Council

**This is Your Personal Data**

## **REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE**

How we handle your information

### **Information for the public**

Everyone working for the Revenues and Benefits service has a legal duty to keep and process information about you in accordance with the law. This document explains why we ask for your personal information, how that information will be used and how you can access your records.

#### **Why is information recorded about me?**

We use information about Council Taxpayers, Business Ratepayers, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support applicants, Blue Badge applicants, Free School Meal applicants, Concessionary Travel applicants, NETS (Northumberland Emergency Transition Support) applicants and investigation files to enable us to carry out specific functions for which we are responsible and to provide you with a service.

We keep records about Council Taxpayers, Business Ratepayers, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support applicants, Blue Badge applicants, Free School Meal applicants, Concessionary Travel applicants, NETS applicants and investigation files. These may be written down (manual records), or kept on a computer (electronic records).

#### **These records may include:**

- basic details about you, for example, name, address, date of birth
- unique identifiers (such as your NI number, bank account details)
- contact we have had with you, for example, appointments & letters of correspondence
- notes on accounts and reports about your relevant circumstances
- details and records about the service you have received
- relevant information from other people that we have been in contact with in relation to the service that you have received
- Application forms for exemptions, discounts and reliefs you have completed for Council Tax and Business Rates related matters
- Direct Debit instructions for council tax and business rates
- Application forms and supporting evidence submitted for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support related matters, Blue Badge related matters, Free School Meal related matters, Concessionary Travel related matters
- Data collected in support of NETS applications
- Investigation files and notes

#### **What is the information used for?**

The records are used to administer and fulfil statutory duties placed upon the Council with regard to the administration of Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, Blue Badges, Free School Meals, Concessionary Travel, NETS scheme and investigation files.



# Northumberland County Council

It is important that your records are accurate and up-to-date as they will help make sure that our staff are able to provide you with the help, advice or support you need.

If you do not provide us with this information then we will not be able to administer the services we provide.

## **How long for?**

In order to provide you with this service, we rely on the legal basis of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, Localism Act 2011 and related Statutory Instruments and Guidance. Your details will be kept for [six years plus the current financial year] (unless there are arrears on your council tax or business rates account, until the arrears are cleared, or, the lifetime of your current housing benefit/council tax support claim). Processing is kept to a minimum and will only be processed in accordance with the law.

Information will only be shared with third parties if they have genuine and lawful need for it.

## **Occasions when your information needs to be disclosed (shared) include:**

- third party organisations who are contracted to provide services on our behalf for example, debt collection agencies
- where the health and safety of others is at risk
- when the law requires us to pass on information under special circumstances
- for law enforcement functions
- crime prevention
- detection of fraud as part of the National Fraud Initiative

## **Anyone who receives information from us has a legal duty to keep it confidential**

We are required by law to report certain information to appropriate authorities – for example:

- where we encounter infectious diseases which may be a public health concern
- where a formal court order has been issued.

## **Partner organisations**

We may work with third party organisations to carry out our business where it is more cost effective for the Council, these could include the mailing of bills and correspondence.

Information will be processed within the EEA and will not be shared with overseas recipients. Where we do this we will always ensure that your information is subject to strict agreement on how it will be used.

## **Can I see my records?**

The General Data Protection Regulation allows you to find out what information is held about you, on paper and computer records. This is known as 'right of subject access' and applies to your Revenues and Benefits Service records along with all other personal records.

If you wish to see a copy of your records you should submit a Subject Access Request which is available on our website or by contacting the Information Governance Office directly. You are entitled to receive a copy of your records free of charge, within a month.



# Northumberland County Council

In certain circumstances access to your records may be limited, for example, if the records you have asked for contain information relating to another person.

## Do I have other rights?

Data Protection laws gives you the right:

1. To be informed why, where and how we use your information.
2. To ask for access to your information.
3. To ask for information to be corrected if inaccurate or incomplete.
4. To ask for your information to be deleted or removed where there is no need for us to continue processing it.
5. To ask us to restrict the use of your information.
6. To ask us to copy or transfer your information from one IT system to another in a safe and secure way, without impacting the quality of the information.
7. To object to how your information is used.
8. To challenge any decisions made without human intervention (automated decision making).
9. To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office whose contact details are below.
10. If our processing is based upon your consent, to withdraw your consent.

## Further information

If you would like to know more about how we use your information, or if for any reason you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described in this leaflet, please tell us. Please contact Graeme Barnes on 01670 624351 or email: [graeme.barnes@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.barnes@northumberland.gov.uk)

Data Protection Officer: [informationgovernance@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:informationgovernance@northumberland.gov.uk)

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office if you are unhappy with the way we process your data. Details can be found on the ICO website, or you may write to the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number

Email: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)