

## **Privacy Information – Revenues and Benefits**

Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council is a registered data controller and we collect and use information personal to you in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

This document outlines what you can expect from us when you provide us with your personal information.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Revenues and Benefits Service have a statutory responsibility for accurately billing council tax ensuring that the correct tax amount is calculated for collection. They also administer claims for housing benefit. Functions include but not limited to:

- Council Tax
- Housing Benefit
- Welfare Rights

We will only collect and use personal information to enable us to identify you and locate your personal data on our systems, ensuring that any discounts/exemptions/reductions are awarded and the amount due for council tax is charged correctly each year. That any entitlement to housing benefit is correctly calculated and paid. To enable us to effectively collect council tax and any overpaid housing benefit. Information may also be used for the prevention and detection of fraud.

### **Why we are asking for your information and how will we use the information about you?**

We will ensure that we have a lawful basis to collect your personal information and use it to deliver our services to you.

We may collect and use your personal information with your consent. However in some circumstances we do not require consent as we must comply with our legal obligations, and to carry out tasks in the public interest. The processing is necessary for us to perform our official function - to administer your council tax account in accordance with The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 and/or assess your entitlement to Housing Benefit in accordance with The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and to administer payments in accordance with the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (the DFA regulations). If we need to collect special category (sensitive) personal information, we rely upon reasons of substantial public interest (equality of opportunity or treatment).

### **We use your personal information to:**

We collect and process information about you for the following purposes:

- to calculate any entitlement to Housing Benefit;
- to calculate any entitlement to a discretionary housing payment
- to calculate any entitlement to a welfare assistance claim;
- to respond to requests for advice and guidance;
- seek your views or comments on the services we provide;
- notify you of changes to our services;
- to respond to a complaint;
- to respond to Councillor or Member of Parliament enquiries;
- to monitor our performance;
- assess your entitlement to discretionary payments in line with Council policies;
- to accurately charge council tax;
- collect council tax in respect of any property you are liable for;

- by the Council
- and enforcement agents contracted to the Council for the collection of council tax, overpaid Housing Benefit, unpaid Sundry Debtor accounts and related costs.
- for the prevention and detection of crime or fraud including data matching under the National Fraud Initiative

### **Who will use your information?**

In some instances, we may share your information with other services within the Council as part of service delivery or because we are legally required to do so.

We may share your information with, but not limited to the following:

- where we have a statutory obligation to do so, such as for the purposes of the prevention, detection and prosecution of crime or in the interests of public safety.
- for enforcement action and legal proceedings in respect of unpaid taxes,
- if the benefits to a child or young person that will arise from sharing the information outweigh both the public and any individual's interest in keeping the information confidential.

In administering your council tax account in accordance with The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 and/or assess your entitlement to Housing Benefit in accordance with The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 we may share your information with the following organisations but not limited to the following:

- Department of Work and Pensions
- Valuation Office Agency
- our housing department
- our Welfare Rights Team
- private sector housing
- planning department
- customer service centre network
- Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services
- Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Office of National Statistics

We share information with these departments to prevent fraud and also to ensure we are billing the correct liable parties.

We share the information with the Welfare Rights Team to conduct benefit take-up/advice/support or other service the Council may offer.

We share information with the Department for Works and Pensions with regard to requests for attachments of benefits and with employers for requests for attachments to earnings. We share information with the Valuation Office Agency – to ensure we bring properties into the ratings list and bill the liable party for council tax.

We share information with Her Majesty's Court Tribunal Service with regard to council tax cases where recovery action is proceeding.

We share information with the Office of National Statistics for them to use for statistical and research purposes.

### **What personal information do we hold about you?**

Other organisations may share your personal information with us for the purpose of service delivery or because they are legally required to do so.

You may be asked to enter personal data on one of our forms or asked to give personal information if you call us. 'Personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person.

The personal information we collect could be:

- Name
- Address
- occupancy status such as how many adults reside in the property and who they are
- who the liable party for council tax is
- Who the benefit claimant is
- employment and benefit details including employer name, payslips, type of benefit and amount
- contact details: telephone number, email address
- income and expenditure details, where a customer is in payment default
- bank details for customers paying by direct debit or benefit claimants who are paid by direct debit.

The above list is not exhaustive. The information we request will be the minimum necessary in order to provide our services effectively and to perform our statutory duties.

We may also hold what is known as special category data which would include information relating to race or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data and health data.

To find out more information about this, please contact the [Information Governance Team](#).

### **How long we will keep your personal information for?**

Your information will be held in accordance with the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Retention Schedule.

### **Access to your information and correction (8)**

You have the right to request the following in relation to the personal information we hold. Subject to some legal exceptions, you have the right:

- to have any inaccuracies corrected;
- to have your personal data erased;
- to place a restriction on our processing of your data;
- to object to processing; and
- to request your data to be ported (data portability).

If you would like to exercise any of the rights outlined above please contact [us](#). If you would like further information about your rights to your information, please visit the [Information Commissioner's Office website](#).

You also have the right to request a copy of the personal information that the Council holds about you. To do this please complete this [form](#).

If you have given your consent for us to use your personal information and wish to withdraw this consent. Please contact the [Information Governance Team](#).

### **What happens if I don't provide you with my personal information?**

If you do not provide us with the personal information we have requested, it may not be possible to deliver our services to you. For more information about how this might affect you, please contact the [Information Governance Team](#).

### **Keeping your personal information secure**

We have appropriate security measures in place to prevent personal information from being accidentally lost, or used or accessed in an unauthorised way. Those processing your information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

We also have procedures in place to deal with any suspected data breach. We will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected data security breach where we are legally required to do so.

### **How to contact us**

Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council's Data Protection Officer is Ian Coxon.

If something goes wrong with your personal information or if you have any questions about how we use it, please contact the Information Governance Team in the first instance at [foiandcomplaints@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:foiandcomplaints@stockton.gov.uk) or 01642 527521.

If you remain unhappy about the way which we have handled your personal information and wish to complain, you can contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

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

**Telephone:** 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745

**Fax:** 01625 524 510