

How your personal Information is used for Housing Benefit

Here at Midlothian Council, we take your privacy seriously. Under the Data Protection Act 2018, you have a right to know how we collect, use and share your personal data.

This privacy notice explains the information we need in order to carry out Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction services. This activity is part of the Revenues Services provided by Midlothian Council. More information about the Customer and Housing Services privacy notice can be found at www.midlothian.gov.uk/privacy.

Our Privacy Promise

We promise to collect, process, store and share your data safely and securely.

What lets us collect your information?

If we work with you we will be acting under some, or all, of the legislation noted below:

- Social Security Administration Act 1992
- The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- The Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Regulations 2012

What kinds of personal data do we collect?

The personal data we collect might include your **name, date of birth, address, National Insurance Number, or other information that identifies you**. If necessary, we might also collect what is called 'special category' data – that is, sensitive information such as medical/health information.

How do we collect your personal data?

We collect your personal data in many different ways. You might give us your personal data yourself, by entering your information in a form on the Council website or by contacting a Council Officer in person, in writing or over the phone. We might also receive your personal data from other agencies or local authorities. If we share information regularly with another organisation, the conditions for sharing your personal data are set out in an Information Sharing Agreement.

How do we use your personal data?

We will use this information to process your claim for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments. We may check some of this information with other sources to ensure that this data is accurate.

We may also use your personal data to help prevent or detect crime and/or when required by law and if necessary share it with other public bodies for those purposes.

Why do we share your personal data?

We will only share information with other organisations where it is necessary, either to comply with a legal obligation, or where permitted under the Data Protection Act, for example, where sharing is necessary for us to carry out the Benefits function or if there is a public interest to do so such as the prevention and/or detection of crime including fraud.

We participate in anti-fraud data matching exercises carried out by other agencies such as the National Fraud Initiative (operated on behalf of Audit Scotland and the Housing Benefit Matching Service (conducted on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions).

We may also share your information with debt management organisations engaged by us and employers in relation to outstanding housing benefit overpayments. We may also share your information for the same purposes with other public organisations, including neighbouring councils that handle public funds, and with the police.

With whom do we share your personal data?

If necessary, we might share your personal data with other agencies and authorities, depending on the service being provided. We will only share your personal data if it is necessary to do so, and the appropriate conditions have been met.

The external bodies with whom we share Housing Benefit information might include (organisations with a star are mandatory):

- Department for Work and Pensions *
- HMRC *
- Private and Registered Social landlords
- Sheriff Officer

Personal data also might be shared between Midlothian Council services, including Schools.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Your personal data is kept in line with Midlothian Council's Retention Schedule. The retention schedule sets out the kinds of information the Council creates and uses, how long it should be kept, and what should be done with it at the end of its 'life'. To access our retention schedule please click on the link below:

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/1632/business_classification_schemeretention_schedule

Further Information

You can find out more about how we use your information to detect and prevent fraud or crime, information collected through our website, recorded telephone calls, CCTV, the rights you have under the Data Protection Act, and how to contact us by referring to the overarching Midlothian Privacy Notice at www.midlothian.gov.uk/privacy.