

**Privacy Notice**  
**Durham County Council**  
**Resources**  
**Welfare Rights Service**

**Who we are and what we do?**

Durham County Council

Resources

Welfare Rights Service

For the purposes of Data Protection, Durham County Council is the Data Controller.

**What we do**

The Welfare Rights Service provides free advice, assistance and representation regarding welfare benefits. The aim of the service is to advise on entitlements to social security benefits and tax credits, to maximise income and to provide appeal representation.

The service can be contacted by members of the public and professionals through the Advice Line telephone number or email address. The service also provides some specialist casework services on a referral basis, which includes the Macmillan Service, Housing Solutions, Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance, and several teams within CYPS and AHS. The service also receives referrals from organisations within the Advice in County Durham Partnership through a Referral Portal.

**What type of personal information do we collect and how do we collect it?**

**Whose data do we collect?**

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

The personal information we collect could be:

- Name
- Marital status and partner's name
- Contact details including: address, telephone numbers, email address
- Date of birth
- National insurance number

- Names and dates of birth of dependent children and young people where relevant
- Housing tenure (eg owner occupier, social landlord, private rented) and occupancy including any non-dependents in the property
- Nationality and immigration status
- Town of birth and maiden name (for blue badge applications)
- Details of income and capital for example earnings, pensions, benefits and savings.
- Where relevant, information regarding health conditions and disabilities
- Details of health and support professionals where relevant
- Bank account details where necessary for a benefit or grant application.

### **How we collect Personal Information**

We collect information about you in the following ways:

- Paper based forms
- By telephone
- By email
- Referral from partner organisation
- By paper correspondence
- Information given to staff within customer service centres

This information is then stored on our ICM database.

### **What is our power to obtain and use the personal data?**

When we collect and use your personal information we rely on the following power:

The Lawful Basis (Article 6)

e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller;

Conditions from Article 9 (special category data)

a) the data subject has given explicit consent;

### **What is your personal information used for?**

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

- To provide you with our services
- To manage our service and plan future services
- To check the quality of our services and train our staff who provide the service
- To make referrals to other organisations we have discussed with you
- To ensure that the information we hold about you is kept up-to-date;
- To deal with any problems or complaints that arise in relation to our service to you;

- For assessment and analysis purposes to help develop and improve our service

## **Will your personal information be shared?**

. We may share your personal information in certain circumstances:

- where we are contacting an organisation on your behalf as part of our service, for example DWP, HMCTS or HMRC
- where we are making a referral to another advice or support organisation (with your knowledge and agreement)
- In the case of the post commissioned by the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance, we will share your personal information with the Home Group, which is the managing organisation for the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance
- 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.
- 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.

## **How do we keep your personal information secure?**

The security of your personal information is important to us. This is why we follow a range of security policies and procedures to control and safeguard access to and use of your personal information:

- Controlling access to systems and networks allows us to stop people who are not allowed to view your personal information from getting access to it
- Training for our staff allows us to make them aware of how to handle information and how and when to report when something goes wrong
- Regular testing of our technology and ways of working including keeping up to date on the latest security updates (commonly called patches)

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

After we deliver a service to you, we have to keep your information as a business record of what was delivered. The type of service will determine how long we have to keep it and this is detailed in our corporate retention guidelines.

We will keep your personal data in the following cases;

- While you have an active case with us
- For all other cases the retention period for the personal data we hold is the current year plus a further six years from date case is closed.

## Is your personal information processed outside the EU?

We do not process your personal information outside the UK.

## Marketing

At no time will your information be passed to organisations external to us and our partners for marketing or sales purposes or for any commercial use without your prior express consent.

If you do intend to use the personal information you collect for marketing, then you will need to have an explicit consent form so they can opt in

## What are your information rights?

Your Information Rights are set out in the law. Subject to some legal exceptions, you have the right to:

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

**If you wish to exercise your information rights, please contact our Data Protection Officer at [DPO@durham.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@durham.gov.uk) or alternatively write to:**

DPO  
Floor 4, Room 143-148  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UF

You also have the right to request a copy of the personal information council holds about you. To do this, you can apply on line or download an application form from the [DCC website](#) or you can contact the data protection team at [inforights@durham.gov.uk](mailto:inforights@durham.gov.uk)

## Further Information

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) provides help and guidance to make sure we apply the best standards to protecting your personal information. If something goes wrong with your personal information, or you have questions about how we process your data, please contact our Data Protection Officer at [DPO@durham.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@durham.gov.uk).

If we have not been able to deal with your complaint, you can also 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 51

