

## **Privacy Notice for Housing Benefit including Discretionary Housing Payments**

### **Obtaining your personal information**

We are likely to have been provided with information by you as an applicant for Housing Benefit or Discretionary Housing Payments. Your information may have been provided to us by a third party such as a landlord or someone acting on your behalf. Information may have been shared with us by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), His Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC), the Pension Service (PS), a landlord, Agent, Welfare Advice Agency or another service area within Exeter City Council.

### **The information being processed**

The information we will hold is your name, national insurance number, date of birth, contact details, medical and financial information. Financial details will include as relevant: income including earnings, pensions and benefit entitlement; capital and savings; bank account details; rent charges and arrears information. We will also hold these details for any partner you may have along with details confirming names, dates of birth and, where relevant, national insurance numbers and financial details of other members of your household.

### **How we use your personal information**

This information will be used for assessing your eligibility for and entitlement to benefits (including Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments), administering your claim including making payments and recovering any overpaid amounts. The council's lawful basis for processing the information is to comply with a legal 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 (as amended). The administration of benefits and support will include various activities to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of benefit payments such as internal and external audit, system maintenance and quality assurance checks. Failure to provide us with the information we need in order to assess your claim will mean we will be unable to make an award.

We will use your data in profiling to help to inform us where additional local welfare support funding for low income families, such as administration of the Household Support Fund, should be targeted.

Data derived from the Department for Work and Pensions is used in a secure test environment for the testing and development of processing systems updates, improvements and enhancements prior to these being applied to live environments.

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 Support (working age) Scheme in accordance with our obligations under the Local Government Finance Act 2012.

### **Who will receive or see my personal information**

To ensure that the council provides you with an efficient and effective service we will sometimes need to share your information between teams within the council, such as Electoral Services, Environmental Health and Council Tax, for the purpose of carrying out our regulatory functions and legal obligations and for the purpose of identifying and preventing fraud.

The Council's Income Collection Team are responsible for recovering overpaid Housing Benefit. You can see more information about how they will use your information in the Privacy Notice for Sundry Debtors.

We may also share your information with our partner organisations that support the delivery of the service you may receive including our IT service provider, Strata Service Solutions Ltd; our benefits processing software supplier, MRI Community Software, for the purposes of processing, testing software releases and system support; Synertec Ltd for printing and posting of customer correspondence.

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.

We may check information you have provided in order to ensure the accuracy of the information, to prevent or detect fraud or to protect public funds. We may check information with any or all of the following:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Pensions Service
- Housing Benefit Matching Service

- HMRC
- Tribunal Service
- Valuation Tribunal
- You/your partner's employer or pension provider
- Other local authorities administering Housing Benefit
- South West Audit Partnership
- Other council service areas (Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing)
- Such other organisations and agencies that may hold information necessary to confirm your entitlement, where the law allows.

We will only ever share your information if we are satisfied that our partners or suppliers have sufficient measures in place to protect your information in the same way that we do. We will never share your information for marketing purposes.

#### **How long your data will be held and will it be secure**

We will keep your information for 6 years from the latest of the date you stop receiving Housing Benefit from us or any outstanding overpayment has been repaid, fraud action or appeal activity is concluded. When we no longer need to keep your information, we will securely and confidentially dispose of it.

#### **More information**

For more information about how we look after your information or to find out more about your rights, go to [www.exeter.gov.uk/DataProtection](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/DataProtection) or contact the Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:data.protection@exeter.gov.uk)).