



## **Data Protection Act 1998**

### **Information for Service Users**

#### **How Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Uses Personal Information**

## **Data Protection Act 1998**

The Data Protection Act 1998 is designed to ensure that personal information about individuals is used in a fair and lawful way and that organisations have procedures in place to ensure that your rights under this Act are respected.

### **Why do we process your Personal Information?**

We will collect information from you in order to provide the service requested such as calculating housing benefit or registering you as a member of a library. Information will not be used for any other purpose unless you have consented or where certain limited exemptions to the Act apply. We will also collect information where we have a statutory duty to do so, such as when compiling the Electoral Register or assessing liability for Council Tax. We may also use information for management purposes, such as auditing, planning future services or for research. However, information is usually anonymised for these purposes (i.e. details that can identify you have been removed).

### **Who will we disclose information to?**

Information will only be shared between services where we have advised you that this will happen or where there is a statutory obligation or right to do so. The Council sometimes uses other organisations to provide a service but we will only give them enough information to carry out that service and they will be under an obligation to keep your information confidential. The Council also has a partnership with BT and together they have formed a joint venture company called RBT(Connect) Ltd. This company will carry out some services on behalf of the Council and will be provided with the necessary information to do so. Again, your information will be protected by a strict code of confidentiality and won't be used for any other purpose.

### **What does the Council have to do to comply with the Data Protection Act?**

- We must make it clear how we will use the information you give us and only use that information for lawful purposes.
- We must tell the Information Commissioner (the government regulator for the Data Protection Act), what we will use information for. For example, we specify that we will use information for the provision of housing services or the collection of council tax. We must then only use information for those purposes.
- We must only collect the minimum amount of information we need for a particular purpose. For example, when you join the library, we will only collect the information we need to identify you, issue a library card, maintain a record of your borrowings and to contact you when required.
- We must take steps to ensure that data is recorded accurately and is kept that way. This will include quality control checks and auditing of records. If you believe any of your records are not accurate, please let us know as soon as possible.
- We can only retain your information as long as it is required to carry out a function or where specified in other legislation. For example, if you applied for a job with the Council, your details would be retained while the selection process was under way and for a set period afterwards in case you requested feedback or were not happy with the process.
- We must respect your rights under the Act, which are:
  - to ask the Council if it holds personal information about you
  - to ask what it uses the information for

- to be given a copy of the information on request
- to be told who the Council may disclose information to
- to ask for inaccurate information to be corrected
- in certain cases, to require the Council not to process information if this would cause substantial and unnecessary damage or distress
- to ask the Council not to process information for direct marketing
- to ask a Court to order the Council to rectify, block, erase or destroy personal information which is inaccurate
- to compensation (damages) if the Council gets things wrong and damage or distress is caused as a result
- to require the Council not to make decisions which significantly affect you, solely by automatic means
- We must have measures in place to keep your information secure. Where information is very sensitive, for example, in relation to the adoption of a child, the security must be very strict.
- If we transfer data overseas, we must check that the country has data protection legislation and that your information will be protected to the same standard as we would protect it. However, the Council very rarely has any need to transfer information overseas.

### **How do you obtain further advice?**

If you wish to obtain copies of your own information, or have any query relating to how your personal information is used, please contact the Data Protection Officer, Legal & Democratic Services, Civic Building, Walker Place, Rotherham, S65 1UF, Telephone 01709 823566.