

Privacy Notice

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Why we are collecting your data

Brentwood Borough Council is a data controller. This means we need to collect your personal data so that we can work out whether or not you are entitled to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. We will only collect the personal data from you, internal departments and external organisations that we need in order to deal with applications for these benefits.

The information we collect

- Name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Evidence of your identity
- Information regarding your income, including employment, benefits and pensions
- Information regarding your savings, including bank accounts, shares and unit trusts
- National Insurance Number
- Details about where you live
- Details of the rent you pay
- Name and address of your landlord (if you have one)
- Details about your nationality and immigration status
- Details about your health, if relevant
- Phone Number - you do not have to provide this but if you do we may use your phone number to contact you about your application
- Email Address - you do not have to provide this but if you do we may email you about your application

Please note: this information will also be collected for other members of your household, where relevant.

The data is collected through:

- Emails
- Post
- Phone
- Website
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter and Linked in) – we use social media for the purpose of tracing employment details where there is an outstanding debt to be recovered

The basis for the processing

We do this as a task carried out under a legal obligation and public interest. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support assessments are made using regulations laid down by the Government. We will not be able to assess any entitlement without the personal data you provide us with.

The relevant legislation is The Local Government Finance Act 1992, The Council Tax Reduction Schemes Regulations 2013.

Who we share your information with

Your information will initially be administered by the Council's Revenues & Benefits Service. However, we do share your information with other bodies. That means that we may contact people like your landlord, your employer or your pension provider in order to confirm information that you have given us if you are unable to provide the proof yourself. We will only give them information about you which is relevant to the query. If you do not want us to contact third parties, we may be unable to assess your claim.

We have a legal obligation to share your information with the Department for Work and Pensions for statistical analysis, policy formulation and the prevention of fraud and error. We also have a public interest reason, which is supported by legislation, to share your data with the Cabinet Office (National Fraud Initiative), Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs, Vigilant Apps Limited, Mag:Net Solutions Limited, Equifax Ltd, Rossendales Ltd, Newlyn PLC, Phoenix Commercial Collections Ltd, oneSource, Reventus, Rundles or Hambury Tilmond for the purpose of preventing and detecting fraud and error.

We will never sell your data. However, we may share some of your personal information with third parties to:

- pursue people or companies who owe us money. We may share your information with debt collection agencies.
- help business partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to deliver any contract we enter with them for you.
- help us if we need additional professional or legal advice on a matter relating to you.
- help prevent fraud. We may share your information with credit reference agencies and other companies for use in credit decisions. Credit agencies may record these searches, but that will not affect your credit standing.
- to improve and optimise the performance of our websites and social media accounts. Analytics and search engine providers that we use can collect your data when you interact with us online. However, they will aggregate and anonymise the information, meaning we can't identify any individual personally.
- work out if a grant we have spent was successful in achieving its aims. This could be funding from a Government or a grant from a local, regional or national organisation such as Sport England and National/Heritage Lottery Fund. However, they will aggregate and anonymise the information, meaning we can't identify any individual personally.

Providing accurate information

We need to hold accurate and up to date information about you so that we can deliver appropriate services. If any of your details change, you need to tell us as soon as possible so that we can update your records.

We will not:

- use your information for marketing or sales purposes without your prior explicit consent.
- send or store your data abroad unless it meets the requirements of the Data Protection regulations.
- make decisions about you based on automated processing.

How long we keep your information

We will keep all records relating to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claim for you as long as you have an ongoing claim with us. For closed claims for up to a maximum of 6 years plus current year.

Your rights

The GDPR provides the following rights for individuals:

- The right to be informed – this relates to how we use your personal data
- The right of access - You can ask for access to the information we hold on you
- The right to rectification - You can ask to change information you think is inaccurate
- The right to erasure - You can ask to delete information (right to be forgotten) in certain circumstances
- The right to restrict processing - You can ask to limit what we use your personal data for
- The right to data portability - You can ask to have your information moved to another provider
- The right to object – You can object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances
- You also have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

You can find more information here:

<http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/index.php?cid=2879>

<https://ico.org.uk/>