

Your Right to Know

Requesting personal information
under the Data Protection Act 1998

Return the form, or write to:

Strategic Support
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5LD

e: DP@westberks.gov.uk
www.westberks.gov.uk/dataprotection

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 519817.



Introduction

In this leaflet we explain your rights, as a user of Council services, to access your personal information and to be provided with information about the uses to which it is put. More information is available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk/dataprotection

Your personal information

West Berkshire Council holds personal information about you in order to provide you with the services you require, collect Council tax, assess the correct level of benefits for your needs, and provide you with up to date information about Council services. We may share this information within the Council or with other organisations which provide you with services.

Your rights

It is helpful if you describe the specific records you wish to view or receive. You have a right to see the information we hold about you, to understand the way we use it, and to be provided with a copy. You have a right to understand who we share your information with, and you may ask for inaccurate information to be corrected.

Requesting personal information

Applications should be made in writing. If you find it easier, we have supplied a form on which you may apply but we will also accept a letter of application. If you have problems making a written application you can speak to the Information Management Officer (contact details overleaf) who can offer assistance. If you need outside assistance or support the Citizen's Advice Bureau may be able to help.

The law allows the Council to charge a fee of £10 to cover some of the cost of searching for your data, payable by cheque or postal order (cash payments will be accepted in person, but are not recommended for postal applications). Please make these payable to West Berkshire District Council, write your name and address on the back, and send with your letter or application form to the address overleaf.

In limited circumstances the Council will waive this fee. In particular the fee will not be charged in respect of the following:

- Applications by or on behalf of any child under the age of 18.
- Applications by or on behalf of young people under the age of 25 who are or have been in the care of the Authority

Requests for single items from your records may also be dealt with informally and at no charge

What you can't access

You will not be able to see personal information which includes information about another person unless that person gives permission, or we accept that you are acting as their agent. Where the information has been provided by a professional from another organisation we may need their permission to supply this.

There may be other reasons why the Council cannot supply copies of some of your information. This can be because other legislation applies, or because the Council is engaged in legal proceedings or statutory processes which would be prejudiced by providing the information. We may also refuse requests for exceptionally large collections of hard copy records. In such cases we will explain why we have not supplied the information requested but may be able to suggest other ways for you to view it.

Acting on behalf of others

Carers for vulnerable adults, and parents of children may apply on their behalf. However, the Data Protection Act 1998 assumes that any person is competent to apply for their own information, so we may need additional confirmation that you are acting for the person, and that they cannot make the request themselves. Where children are of an age to understand the process, we will also ask for their permission before providing their information to a parent or guardian.

Keeping your information safe

The Council is required by law to keep your personal information safe. Usually this will be managed by keeping it confidentially either on computer or in secure manual filing systems. Maintaining your records and keeping them secure is the responsibility of the council department providing services to you. If you have a complaint about how your personal information has been used you should raise this with the service concerned in the first instance.