

Your Information and the Co-operative



Introduction

Tenants First Housing Co-operative Ltd (the Co-operative) is registered with the Information Commissioner as the Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Co-operative has produced this leaflet to advise what information we hold about you, how we will review this information and what purposes the information may be used for.

We acknowledge that we retain a considerable amount of personal information relating to all our members and applicants for housing and we have a duty to ensure that we use, store and dispose of this information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

It is vital that we hold current, accurate information about you and your household. This will enable us to provide an effective service, ensuring that the tenancy agreement between us is fulfilled, before, during and after your tenancy.

We are committed to:

- Keeping your records securely.
- Keeping your records up to date and accurate, where this is within our control.
- Preventing unauthorised access to your information.
- Disposing of your records securely when they are no longer required.

Your Information

The Co-operative will collect and use your information (this may include members of your household) to manage your, application for housing, tenancy, and Co-operative membership. We will also use this information to meet legal, statutory and regulatory obligations and responsibilities.

We may also use it to pursue debt, to trace someone where a tenancy appears to be abandoned, for fraud investigations, crime prevention or the prosecution of offenders.

We may also utilise it to advise of benefits of membership, obtain feedback on services, for research or other areas where you have given express permission for the use of your details.

Sensitive Personal Information

You have particular rights in relation to certain sensitive personal data that we may hold on you, or members of your household.

Any information we have received from you or from a 3rd party (e.g. doctor) relating to any of the following is considered to be sensitive information:

Ethnic or racial origin; state of physical or mental health; sexual life; religious or similar beliefs; trade union membership; criminal records or allegations of criminal conduct.

We will only process such information where necessary. For example, we may use information for equal opportunities monitoring or where needed to manage aspects of your application or tenancy. However, if you have any specific concerns about sensitive personal information, please contact your Housing Officer. If after investigation, we find there is no need to continue to hold this information, it will be securely destroyed.

Who Else Can We Pass Your Information To?

We may need to disclose your information to other companies within our group, our agents and other service providers for the purposes described in Your Information above.

We will only share the information that is required for a specific purpose. For example, basic, name address and contact information would be given to any of our appointed contractors, who require access to your home to carry out any works within the terms of the tenancy agreement and as instructed by us.

If you live in a sheltered property or one served by a Community Alarm, we will also provide the relevant sheltered housing warden/ Community Alarm Call Centre with a copy of your medical and contact details to allow them to carry out their duties.

If the Co-operative has a sound reason to believe that a staff member or a contractor may be at risk in your home we are obliged for health and safety reasons to advise them to take certain precautions. We will not discuss the reasons for needing the precautions with the contractor. This information will only be retained while required for health and safety issues.

Where we have

- a legal right, obligation or responsibility under the Data Protection Act 1998, and / or
- an operational requirement ,

we may pass information on you to organisations or agencies, which may include but are not limited to:

Police; Department of Work and Pensions; Debt Collection Agencies acting on our behalf; Social Work; Council Tax & Housing Benefit Offices; Utilities (Gas & Electric); Scottish Housing Regulator; Our Solicitors and Accountants; TV Licensing Authority and Community Alarm Control Centre.

Marketing

The Co-operative will **not** share information with any others for marketing purposes.

However the Co-operative may contact you (by post, phone, email or in person) with information on products/services etc. that you may be interested in. We will give you the opportunity to opt out of receiving such information. However, please remember that if you do opt out we will be unable to provide you with some information that may be of benefit and interest to you.

Use of CCTV Cameras

Occasionally, where there is a reasonable suspicion of unlawful behaviour within areas owned by the Co-operative, we may install CCTV cameras to either deter or detect crime. Where we intend to deter crime, we will install suitable signage to advise members and others that cameras are operating. However, where the purpose is to detect crime, we will not install signage and we may not inform residents.

Review of Information

The Co-operative will review the information we hold on you and your household on a periodic basis. The Co-operative asks that you help us with this task by keeping us up to date with any changes to your details - for example, changes of name. When you receive a request from the Co-operative to check the details we hold on you, we would also ask that you respond promptly.

Disposal of Information Held

We will dispose securely of all information no longer required, to ensure that you fulfil the terms of your tenancy with us after your tenancy has ended, within a reasonable period of time.

We will only keep the minimum information that is needed to enable us to meet our obligations and/or to ensure you fulfil your tenancy responsibilities, for example in relation to any future right to buy application or tenancy checks that are requested by a prospective landlord. In addition, if you leave your tenancy without fulfilling all the terms of tenancy, we may use the information you provide before, during and after your tenancy to pursue you for the outstanding issues.

Right to Access Information Held

You have the right to see and receive a copy of any personal information (for which we may charge a small fee) that is held by the Co-operative and to have any inaccuracies corrected.

However there may be some information which we are not permitted to give you. For example in some cases where details about other people would also be revealed as result of giving you access to particular information.

If You Want Us to Discuss Your Tenancy with Someone Else

If you want us to discuss any aspect of your tenancy with any individual, organisation or agency other than those who have signed the tenancy agreement, you must provide us with written authorisation. Without this declaration, our staff will only be able to answer general questions in relation to any subject. For example, if you are married and your spouse is the only person named on the tenancy, we can only discuss the rent account with them, even if you are the one who actually pays the rent.

If you contact us, Co-operative staff may ask for additional details to allow them to confirm your identity or if need be to verify the authorisation someone else may have to discuss your information.

Committee Members

Committee members may have access to members' names and addresses to allow them to encourage member participation in the Co-operative.

However Committee members are not permitted access to any other personal information we hold on you.

Any information presented to any Committee member regarding any aspect of your tenancy will not contain any information that can lead to your identification, unless you specifically request that your identity is revealed. For example, any cases presented with a recommendation to pursue legal action are number coded, rather than named. But, if a member wants to attend a meeting in person to put their case their identity would obviously be revealed.

	23 Albert Street, Aberdeen AB25 1XX Tel: (01224) 628400
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27 Slains Court, Peterhead AB42 6YF Tel: (01779) 474 282	
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