

Your **right** to **know**

A brief guide to your right to access council files and see your personal data under the **Data Protection Act 1988**



Your right to know

This leaflet sets out the key issues around your right to access personal information held by Gateshead Council under the Data Protection Act 1998. It explains briefly what the Act covers, what we mean by personal data and what you should do if you want to see any information held by us about you.

Please note. The information available to you under the Data Protection Act is of a personal nature, relevant to you. Your right to see other council information is covered by the Freedom of Information Act. A separate leaflet setting out your rights under this Act is available by contacting the number on the opposite page.

What is personal data?

Personal data is information that can be used to identify a living individual. This includes all the obvious details the council might hold about you like name, address, council tax reference number, rent payment records, etc.

Some information is more sensitive than others. There are extra rules for processing data about your ethnic origin, religious beliefs, trades union membership, party political opinions, sexuality, health, involvement in court proceedings, etc.

How does the council handle personal data?

The personal data we have about you and how we process it depends on which council services you use. Sometimes we collect personal data for one council service and need to use it to give you another service. We will always try to tell you if we share this information between different council services.

Who can look at my personal data?

Council members and employees see your personal data but only the information they need for a specific council purpose. They must not disclose this to anyone else without your consent, unless the law requires it.

If you write to the council about its services or sign a petition that is presented to the council, your personal data may be shared with your local Ward Councillors, Cabinet members and council employees working in the service concerned.



Can I see my personal data?

Yes, you have the right to see information held about you. You must put your request in writing giving us enough information to find what you want together with proof of your identity. You may have to pay a fee of up to £10 (up to £50 for education records) but we will confirm that when we receive your request. We will respond to you within 40 days describing the information we hold, the circumstances under which it is held and if it has been given to others.

We can withhold some data if it:

- refers to other people who have not consented to their information being supplied, or
- might cause serious harm to you or anyone else or might prejudice crime prevention or court proceedings.

If we cannot provide you with copies of the data, we will confirm what type of data we hold and why we hold it.

Can I see personal data about other people?

No. You do not have the right to see information even about other members of your family, friends or neighbours unless you:

- are a parent asking to see your child's education or social services records
- have written proof of your authority to act on behalf of someone else

Even if you meet these requirements we may need to ask you for more information before we reply because of our duty to keep personal data confidential.

Further Information

If you want to make a request for information held about you by Gateshead Council, please contact:

Tanya Brennan, Information Rights Officer by:

Phone: 0191 433 2192

Email: informationrights@gateshead.gov.uk

Letter: Legal and Corporate Services, Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead. NE8 1HH

For more information about The Data Protection Act 1998 please contact the Information Commissioner by:

Phone: 01625 545745

Letter: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk



Different formats

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please contact Diane Brennan, Communications Team on 0191 433 3444.

এই লিফলেটটি 0191 433 3444 নম্বরে ফোন করে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।

此單張備有中文譯本，索閱請電 0191 433 3444

Kopii tohoto letáku v češtině můžete obdržet když zatelefonujete na číslo 0191 433 3444

برای دریافت این جزوه به زبان فارسی، لطفاً با تلفن 0191 433 3444 تماس حاصل نمایند.

Ce prospectus est disponible sur demande en Français en téléphonant au 0191 433 3444

यह पत्रिका हिन्दी भाषा में प्राप्त करने के लिये कृपया 0191 433 3444 नम्बर पर फोन करें।

Este panfleto está disponível sob pedido em Português, ligando para o n.º 0191 433 3444.

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This leaflet was produced by Legal and Corporate Services,
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