

Key information sheet

Protecting your Data



We collect information about our residents so that we can provide great services to you. We work in diverse communities, with people from a wide range of backgrounds and with different needs and circumstances. Collecting and using information helps us to understand these differences and tailor our services so that they suit individual needs. For example, we ask for the names of people living in your home so that we can check that the rightful tenant is living there, and keep records of partially sighted residents so that we can provide information in large print or in Braille. We take care to make sure that your information is collected, stored and handled confidentially, responsibly and according to legal requirements (the Data Protection Act 1998).

We will:

- Tell you why we need information and how we will use it
- Collect only as much as we need to provide our services
- Take steps to ensure it is accurate and up to date
- Make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary
- Keep it secure and confidential so that nobody can access it who shouldn't.

How we protect your personal information

Access to the information we hold on you is restricted to appropriate staff and to you. Only staff dealing with work related to you and your home (such as processing your rent account) need to see

your information. All of our staff are trained on how to look after your information.

If you telephone us we will ask you some questions, such as your date of birth or when you moved into your home. We do this to check that the caller is who they say they are, which keeps your personal information safe.

We do not pass on your personal information to other organisations without your permission, except in the following situations:

Service delivery

For example, a gas or water company might ask for your details for billing purposes. We would provide them with your name and the date you moved in – we will only share enough information for them to send you a bill.

We will also share information with our business partners, such as repairs contractors, so that they can carry out work to your home. When we do this, we ask the other party to sign a contract or confidentiality agreement with us to state that they will protect your data.

Legal requirements

We sometimes have to share information about our residents with other organisations in order to meet with legal requirements. For example, we must report any changes in your circumstances to the housing benefit department of your local authority. We may share information where relevant with other organisations such as local authorities, central government, the police, welfare advisors, medical professionals and other housing associations.

Tel: 0121 322 7373

Email: info@mercian.org.uk

www.mercian.org.uk

Accessing your information

You have the right to access the information we hold about you. You can do this by making a 'Subject Access Request'. Please make any requests in writing and tell us if there is any information in particular that you would like to see. We will need to check your identity to ensure that we do not release your personal information to someone else that is impersonating you. In a small number of cases, we may not be able to provide you with all of the requested information or give specific details about what has been withheld due to certain conditions of the Data Protection Act.

However, we do aim to be as open as possible and we will respond to your request as soon as we can within the 40-day limit allowed by law. We apply a £10 fee to cover administration costs of these requests.

Updating information

We try to keep our records up to date, and will check the details with you from time to time. You have the right to correct the information we hold about you. If you think any information we hold about you is wrong, please let us know in writing and we will update it. For some things, we may ask for evidence, such as a civil partnership deed, marriage certificate or deed poll to confirm you have legally changed your name.

Marketing information

We do not pass your details on to direct marketing companies. However, we do send targeted information about our services to residents, such as our quarterly newsletter. If you don't want to receive these, please let us know.

Other advice and information

If you have any questions about data protection, please get in touch with us. You can get independent advice about data protection from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or from the Information Commissioner's Office
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

complaint differently if the individual circumstances require it or if there are more helpful ways of dealing with your needs. This action may be instead of or in addition to the complaints procedure, and will always be fair, reasonable and impartial.

Our complaints policy explains the complaints procedure in more detail. It is available on our website or on request.