

# Housing Services Fair Processing Notice

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## Introduction

The OHMS computer system is used by the Council's Housing department to:

- Manage its stock of housing
- Hold details of its tenants
- Maintain a record of rents payments
- Record the details of individuals on the Councils housing list
- Hold details of persons who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

The system is used to record information that you will have provided on forms or documents such as a housing application, tenancy agreement or household survey. You may also have provided certain information when dealing with the council's housing department by phone for example requesting repairs to your Council property.

The Council's Officers within Housing can also update the system with details of your tenancy or situation that will assist the Council in dealing with your housing situation.

The system known as JIGSAW is used solely by the Homeless Prevention Team. This is a specialised system to help Reading Borough Council manage the pathway for homeless families in order to prevent homelessness. It also helps us to collect the required data to report our performance and outcomes for homeless households to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) a return known as H-CLIC (wef 1/4/2018) all of which is anonymous. This is a secure web based system and is only accessible via logins and passwords, issued individually to only those staff who require to access/input this information. This system does not interface with any of our other systems and is considered to be "stand alone" therefore information is entered independently based on what is collected and required. There is no variance from the information that will be collected and stored as listed below although only information required to support a household and prevent them from becoming homeless, or carrying out a full homeless assessment will be recorded in this system.

## What information is held?

The system holds:

- Personal details (name, address, previous address, DOB etc.) for all clients, including household members
- Details of family relationships between the members of a household who are seeking housing/accommodation service from the Council
- Details of the existing accommodation arrangements of the household and details of required accommodation arrangements, if different
- Details of rent and/or deposit due, payments received and under/overpayments
- Details of repairs requested, work completed and associated cost(s)
- Outcome of risk assessments on the properties (e.g. asbestos)
- Outcome of risk assessments on clients (e.g. where there is a history of violence to Council staff)

- Start and end dates of tenancies and void periods
- Details of all the Council's properties, garages, communal areas, green spaces and estates for which Housing Services has a responsibility for repairs or maintenance
- Similar related data associated with the orderly management of the Council's housing stock
- Similar related data associated with the discharge of the Council's obligations to its tenants, Homechoice applicants and those who present as homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.
- Information about people seeking housing advice
- Information about right to buy leaseholders
- Doctor, social worker, special contacts information
- A photograph of tenants

## **How is the information used?**

The data is used to:

- Facilitate the efficient and effective management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock and estates
- Support the Council's tenants and leaseholders and
- Administrate income due from the provision of Housing services
- Help the Council discharge its responsibilities to housing applicants and those who present as homeless or in danger of becoming homeless
- Help the Council to detect fraud and unauthorized occupation and subletting of Council properties
- Data match computer records held by the same or another body including other housing providers and external credit referencing agencies to see how far they match. This is usually personal information, normally name, address, date of birth and national insurance number. Computerised data matching allows fraudulent claims and payments to be identified

## **Who can access to this information?**

The data is accessed by staff working in Housing Services, the service has a number of functional areas e.g. Property Maintenance, Neighbourhood Management, Voids, Income management etc. Staff in each area can access the data that is essential to the performance of their duties.

A small section of the data is accessible to the Council security staff who take out-of-hours calls in respect of emergency repairs.

## **Who else is this information passed to?**

- LOCATA - we have a one-way interface from the OHMS system to a third party company named Locata, a specialist company who manage the Council's choice based lettings system - Homechoice at Reading. The information they receive includes details of property stock (address, availability, property details) and details of applicants on the Homechoice Register (name, address, household members and household makeup, and matching criteria).

- CORE (Continuous Recording system) - Anonymised information about the numbers and types of household who have been housed from the Homechoice Register into permanent Local Authority or Housing Association homes is passed to an external research organisation - TNS Research. TNA Research work on behalf of the Tenant Services Authority. You can find information about CORE can be seen on the TSA website (Link below). Applicants to the Deposit Guarantee Scheme is not sent to TNS.
- NROSH - National Register of Social Housing (NROSH)- we supply details of the structure, location and equipment of the Council's housing stock to NROSH on a regular basis. No person related information is provided. Information on the scheme is available on the NROSH website (link below)
- RBC-Reading Borough Council's Cooperate Investigation and Housing Benefit teams- we supply information to these teams that we suspect has not been reported about any changes in household income and household make up for the purposes of preventing fraud and overpayments of Housing Benefit. We will also supply the Council's Cooperate Investigation team personal information for the purposes of data matching with the National fraud Initiative in line with the Audit Commission. For further information on the audit commissions legal powers and the reason why it matches particular information, see the audit commission's website.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 we also have a legal duty to pass information to third party organizations such as the Police, The Department of Work and Pensions and anti fraud agencies for the purposes of preventing and detecting crime, or for anti-fraud purposes.

### **How is information stored?**

Data is stored in an IT system known as OHMS which is supplied and supported by a private commercial company named Northgate. This application uses an Oracle database for the storage and retrieval of the data.

To ensure security of data the system can only be accessed with a username and password. Each system user has an individual username and password and a user profile which only allows them to access the details they need to carry out their job. All user actions are logged by the application in an audit log.

### **How long is data kept?**

We keep data for seven years from the point it ceases to be active (e.g. seven years after the end of a tenancy).

### **What information do you hold about me?**

If you want to know what information we hold about you, you can make a "Subject Access Request". To do this, download and complete the Subject Access Request Form provided under Attachments, below. You will also be asked for a £10 fee and relevant ID.