

## **The Unity Partnership – Welfare Rights Provision Privacy Notice**

**Date and Version (22 May 2018 – v1)**

### **What this privacy notice is for**

Our core data protection obligations and commitments are set out in [The Unity Partnership's primary privacy notice](#).

The Unity Partnership operate a Welfare Rights Service on behalf of local authority clients providing advice and support to residents and working to increase the take-up of benefits and tax credits available. The Unity Partnership recognises that individuals must make their own decisions and that the role of The Unity Partnership is to give people information to be able to exercise their rights.

Welfare Rights provides advice and support about:

- Benefit entitlement advice
- Assistance completing benefit forms
- Mandatory reconsideration
- Appeals
- Tribunal

In order to enable us to carry out our obligations to you, it is necessary for us to collect and process personal information. This privacy notice provides information on how the Welfare Rights Service may collect and process personal information in relation to supporting you with personal and financial assistance.

### **Updating our privacy notices**

We may update or revise our privacy notices at any time so please refer to the version published on our website for the most up to date details.

### **What we use your information for**

The processing of your information is necessary for us to be able to help you with your case. We also use unnamed information (with no personal details) to help us understand how different problems are affecting society and to take action to tackle these problems.

Where you have given us permission and we have your contact details, we might get in touch to ask for feedback on the service you received and your overall experience of Welfare Rights Service.

We may share your information with other local authority services in order to ensure our records are accurate and up to date, to improve the standard of the services we deliver, and to support the statutory duties of Adult and Children's Social Care and in the prevention of Homelessness.

### **What categories of personal information we use**

We collect information from you when you contact the Welfare Rights Service over the telephone, by email or using the online form.

We may sometimes obtain information about you from other individuals or third parties, where necessary, in order to support you with your personal or financial circumstances. These may include:

- Department of Work and Pensions
- Pension Service
- Job Centre Plus
- Landlords
- Solicitors
- HM Courts and Tribunal Service
- HM Revenue and Customs
- GP Surgery
- Health Professionals
- Adult Social Care
- Children’s Social Services
- Other local authorities
- Charities which may include but not limited to Citizen’s Advice, AGE UK, and MacMillan Cancer Care

Category of Personal Data	Special/Sensitive
Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email address	
Employer details	
Self-employment details including nature of business	
Income and expenditure details	
Capital details	
Household composition	
Date of birth	
National Insurance Number	
Relationship	
Landlord and rent details (as applicable)	
Other properties owned	
Nationality	Yes
Date entered UK	
Temporary absence details	
Student status	
Health (Physical/Mental) need for an overnight carer	Yes
Racial or ethnic origin	Yes

We will use information about your physical or mental health, or disability status to maximise benefit entitlement. If you are in housing cost arrears, we may also use this information to determine whether you are vulnerable and tailor our assessment methods accordingly.

### **Legal basis for processing**

All information processed within the Welfare Rights Service is done so as a result of a direct referral into the service, seeking assistance and support for yourself and processing of your information is undertaken with your explicit consent.

If you fail to provide certain information when requested, we may be prevented from assisting you with your enquiry and you may have difficulty exercising your rights to access welfare benefits or challenge benefit decisions.

### **Information sharing/recipients**

We may share personal information about you with the following organisations:

- Local authorities.
- Software providers: Our or our clients' software providers may have to access the relevant case management system on occasion where there is a fault or to perform necessary upgrades. Access is only granted for the period required to do the necessary work and is then revoked. They do not host any data; instead data is held on site.
- Local Government Ombudsman: when requested as part of any ongoing complaint investigation.
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS): to undertake action to challenge decisions on your behalf.
- Department for Works and Pensions: to advocate on your behalf and challenge benefits decisions.
- Health agencies: to support you with any physical or mental health concerns.
- Charities/Voluntary organisations: for example AGE UK, Shelter, Positive Steps, Foodbanks, and Citizens Advice Bureau to support you with additional needs.
- Registered Social Landlords: for housing support and help to resolve any potential or ongoing housing issues such as rent arrears, eviction, and homelessness.

We may share your information with other departments within a local authority, with your consent if there is a legal basis to do so. Where this happens, data sharing agreements are in place to control the use of this data. These services currently include:

- Adult Social Care: for the purpose of assessment of care needs and potential safeguarding matters.
- Client Financial Affairs: to support the processing of fairer charging assessments.
- Children's Safeguarding: to ensure appropriate support is provided under The Children and Families Act 2014 and enable the Council to provide the local Council Tax discounts to Care leavers up to the age of 21.
- Environment Health: to support housing enforcement activities in relation to your property subject to legal action due to disrepair or abandonment.
- School Admissions: to establish eligibility of Free School Meals.
- Get Oldham Working: to provide career guidance and educational support.

If you provide another person or organisation with authority to discuss or to act on your behalf, we may share information with them. In all cases we would require evidence that you had granted authority before any information is shared.

We may be asked to provide access to personal information by relevant authorities with regulatory powers such as the police, government departments and other local authorities for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders without the permission of the data subject. The Council will consider such requests on a case by case basis.

As well as information collected directly from you, we may also obtain or receive information from the organisations listed above that is specific to your case. Information may include confirmation on personal and financial decisions such as benefit awards, statement of reasons, current and ongoing support provision and medical evidence supporting your case. This will help us decide on the most appropriate action when advocating on your behalf.

### **Data Transfers beyond the European Economic Area (EEA)**

We do not transfer any of your personal information outside the EEA.

### **Automated Decisions**

All the decisions we make through the processing of your personal data involve human intervention.

### **How long we keep your data**

We will only keep your information for as long as it is required by us or other regulatory bodies in order to comply with legal and regulatory requirements or for other operational reasons. In most cases this will be a minimum of six years.

### **Where can I get advice**

More information on how to seek advice in order to exercise your rights, raise a concern or complain about the handling of your personal information by The Unity Partnership can be [found here](#).