

## Privacy Notice for Housing Benefit including Discretionary Housing Payments

### **How we use your personal information**

We use your information to assess your entitlement to Housing Benefit and administer your claim including making payments and recovering overpaid amounts. We are under a legal requirement to deliver this service on behalf of Department for Work and Pensions.

We sometimes need information about people other than the person who has applied for benefits to work out what that person is entitled to. For example, we need information about other people who live in the same household to work out how much the person will be paid.

### **What we will do with it**

Your information will be held and used by the council. We will share the information used in the assessment of your entitlement with the Department for Work and Pensions. We are legally required to provide this information. We share your information with the Housing Benefit Matching Service who match your information against other data sources to identify possible fraud and error.

Should you appeal against a decision we have made on your Housing Benefit award we will have to share your information with The Tribunal Service.

Failure to provide us with information we need in order to assess your claim for Housing Benefit will mean that we are unable to make an award.

We may check information you have provided in order to ensure the accuracy of the information, to prevent or detect fraud or to protect public funds. If necessary to establish your entitlement to Housing Benefit or Discretionary Housing Payments or the amount of your award, we may check information with the following organisations:

- Your landlord including Exeter City Council, Housing Associations or a private landlord and their agents; including previous landlords where this is relevant – tenancy details, dates of residence, rent arrears, household composition
- Department for Work and Pensions – benefit income, household composition, contact details, earnings information
- HMRC – Earnings, Tax Credit and Child Benefit income
- Your / your partner's employer or pension provider – earned income details
- Other local authorities administering Housing Benefit – all details relating to your claim with them that may affect your entitlement to or amount of any payments from us
- Other departments of Exeter City Council (Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Options) – residency, liability for rent, household, income
- Such other organisations and agencies as may hold information necessary to confirm your entitlement, where this is permitted by law

We may share your information with the organisations and individuals above where this is allowed by law including to prevent and detect crime and protect public funds. Instances of suspected Housing Benefit fraud are investigated by the Department for Work and Pensions and your information may be shared with them.

**How long we will keep your information**

We will keep your information for 6 years from the latest of the date you stop receiving Housing Benefit from us or any outstanding overpayment has been repaid, fraud action or appeal activity is concluded. When we no longer need to keep your information, we will securely and confidentially dispose of it.

**More information**

For more information about how we look after your information or to find out more about your rights, go to [www.exeter.gov.uk/DataProtection](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/DataProtection) or contact the Data Protection Officer on 01392 265257.