



RURAL HOUSING TRUST LIMITED

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Purpose

1.1. This policy sets out our commitment to protecting personal data and how we implement that commitment with regards to the collection and use of personal data. Rural Housing Trust Limited (RHTL) is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, an independent body set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

1.2. We are committed to ensuring that we comply with the eight principles of 'good information handling' set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). These are as follows:

- 1.2.1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
- 1.2.2. Personal data shall be obtained for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- 1.2.3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
- 1.2.4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- 1.2.5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
- 1.2.6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR.
- 1.2.7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised and unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
- 1.2.8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

2. Policy statement

2.1. RHTL's policy is to ensure that everyone who has dealings with RHTL has a right to privacy and to expect that all personal information about them will be handled sensitively and with due regard to its confidentiality.

2.2. RHTL will:

- 2.2.1. comply with the law regarding the protection and disclosure of information
- 2.2.2. treat all personal and sensitive organisational information as confidential

- 2.2.3. not disclose personal information without the prior consent of the individual concerned, except to RHTL's professional advisors eg solicitors or in the circumstances outlined in Paragraph 3
- 2.2.4. not gain or attempt to gain access to unauthorised information
- 2.2.5. only send marketing materials and general information about RHTL to those shared owners who have given their consent to receive such documents.
- 2.3. All staff have a duty to respect the confidentiality of personal information held by RHTL. In meeting this duty staff and officers of the Company are expected to exercise judgement and common sense.
- 2.4. RHTL has nominated its Company Secretary to act as RHTL Data Protection Officer (DPO). All enquiries regarding data protection must be passed to the DPO.

3. Disclosure

3.1 Disclosure of personal information outside RHTL will be made only with the express consent of the individual concerned except:

- 3.1.1. to comply with the law (e.g. the police, Inland Revenue, Council Tax Registration Officer, Social Security Fraud Act) or a court order
- 3.1.2. where there is a clear health or safety risk to an individual or members of the public, evidence of fraud against RHTL, or other irregular behaviour
- 3.1.3. in connection with court proceedings or statutory action or any other appropriate actions to enforce compliance with tenancy conditions (e.g. occupation as only residence)
- 3.1.4. where RHTL has entered into a formal protocol with a local authority department
- 3.1.5. to provide the name, address and contact number of a resident to contractors or other agents providing services on RHTL's behalf
- 3.1.6. to provide the name of a resident and the date of occupancy to utility companies and Council tax registration officer
- 3.1.7. to provide information anonymously for bona fide statistical or research purposes, provided it is not possible to identify the individuals to whom the information relates
- 3.1.8. to give the name, address and stated local connection of applicants for housing to local authorities as required by a planning agreement which gives priority to people with a local connection
- 3.1.9. to comply with lawful requests for information from parties with a legal interest in the property and as necessary to deal with compliance with landlord and tenant covenants in the tenant's lease and superior title
- 3.1.10. to provide information to any mortgagees of leaseholders
- 3.1.11. in any other circumstances in which exemptions from the Data Protection Act apply.

4. Procedure

4.1. RHTL has procedures in place to ensure compliance with this policy.

- 4.1.1. Personal information is obtained from an application form completed by all applicants for our shared ownership accommodation. The information is used for the purposes of assessing that the applicant is eligible for occupation of a shared ownership home; and has the financial resources to fund the purchase and ongoing living expenses. Contact details are required for communication.

- 4.1.2. Personal data provided by applicants is assessed by qualified housing and financial managers employed by RHTL against criteria required by local authorities and the company's financial sustainability criteria.
- 4.1.3. An applicant's name, current and former addresses, and connection with a parish may be passed to the local housing authority where required for verification and approval of the application.
- 4.1.4. Reports to provide routine management information, will be anonymised to ensure confidentiality.
- 4.1.5. Unsuccessful applications are deleted within 31 days of rejecting the application. Successful application forms are held for the duration of the shared ownership and destroyed within one year of the sale of the property. The accounting information is held for 7 years after the sale of the property.
- 4.1.6. Personal data is held on a secure database owned by RHTL. Database hosting and IT security is managed on behalf of RHTL by a specialist company holding data in the UK. Paper data can be held in up to 3 offices which are locked at all times and to which no public access is permitted. RHTL has a records destruction policy to ensure data is not held longer than necessary.
- 4.1.7. Disclosure of personal information, other than as specifically authorised in an application form or as set out in 3 above, is approved by a Director.

5. Review

- 5.1. This policy and procedure will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of RHTL and is in line with current legislation.

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