

Children's Services privacy notice

St Helens Children's Services are fully committed to protecting your privacy in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which regulates how we process personal information.

The purpose of this privacy notice is to explain how St Helens Children's Services collect, use and share your personal information. It also explains about your privacy rights and how the law protects you.

Who is the Data Controller?

St Helens Borough Council is the data controller for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and is responsible for deciding how Children's Services process (that is, collect, hold, use and disclose to third parties) your personal information.

St Helens Borough Council Data Protection Officer can be contacted via email at: dataprotection@sthelens.gov.uk.

What we use your personal information for?

St Helens Children Services is responsible for carrying out a wide range of duties and provisions under the Children and Families Act 2014.

In order to plan, monitor and realign our delivery of services to meet the needs of St Helens children, young people and families' we carefully and responsibly use the information we collect. Where personal information is used for statistical purposes, we ensure it is anonymised.

In certain cases, such as safeguarding enquiries and criminal investigations, we are legally obliged to provide information to the police. However, we have procedures in place that ensures this is carried out securely and confidentially.

We use your personal information primarily to provide advice and guidance, assessments, services, support and safeguarding for your children and your family to better meet the needs of your children and family and to provide the help that you require as early as possible. This includes the provision of:

- Services to, and monitoring of, vulnerable children and young people, including services to children in need, safeguarding, looked after

children, children leaving care, children with disabilities, children who are fostered or adopted (This includes surveys and feedback forms to monitor and measure the effectiveness of specific Children's services).

- Enhanced and preventative services to children and families on the edge of care to prevent children coming into care or accommodation.
- Specialist services for children and families who may be vulnerable or have higher levels of need such as special education needs or who are at risk of youth offending.
- The Supporting Families Programme - the Government's national initiative to turn around the lives of families with multiple needs.
- Services to facilitate the provision of services to families, for example, transport.
- Providing multi-organisational safeguarding schemes, such as **Operation Encompass**.

We also process this information to assess the quality of our services, evaluate and improve our policies and procedures.

Information we may collect:

The information you provide helps us to support you and your family and meet our legal responsibilities, for example as part of an assessment of educational, social care or family support needs.

The information will be regarded as personal and sensitive, but we will ensure we only ask you for information that is necessary for us to provide you with a service or meet our legal obligations.

Our teams also receive information from a variety of third-party organisations and individuals. We process and retain this information as part of our statutory obligations and duties, however, your data rights remain unaffected.

How the law protects you and the legal basis for processing your information:

We will process your personal information in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which requires us to indicate which legal basis we are relying on in order to process your personal data.

Our legal basis for processing this information is because it is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Data Protection Act 2018 schedule 3, part 3 para 8).

These tasks we carry out are under the:

- Children and Families Act 2014, and
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2015 – Statutory Guidance
- Foster Services Regulations 2011 – Statutory Guidance
- Education and Inspection Act 2011
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Childcare Act 2006
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Adoption & Children Act 2002 and associated regulations.
- Children Act 1989
- Transport Act 1985
- SEND Code of Practice 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Equalities Act 2010
- Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children – Statutory Guidance
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Local Government Act 1972
- Education Act 1996

We have legal grounds to process special category data and criminal convictions data where it is in the exercise of a statutory function and it is in the necessary for reasons in the substantial public interest (DPA 2018 schedule 1, part 2, para 18). The statutory functions are as set out above.

Where appropriate, we may also seek specific consent to use your information in certain ways. This will normally be where the use of the data is not necessary for the above purposes but may be useful or helpful to us to provide services. For example, all marketing and feedback where personal information is obtained alongside, and directed at, individuals, and where personal information, such as photographs/videos, are used for publicity purposes.

Who we share your information with

We may disclose your personal information to your family including persons with parental responsibility as well as public bodies and other organisations, in particular:

- Authorised teams within St Helens Council working to improve outcomes for children and young people
- Commissioned providers of local authority services (such as education or health services)
- Schools, colleges and early years providers as well as wider education or training providers
- Local multi-agency forums
- Partner organisations signed up to our Information Sharing Agreements, where necessary, which may include NHS teams, health visitors, midwives, district councils, housing providers, Police, Crown Prosecution Service, school nurses, doctors and mental health workers
- Other local authorities and social care or health providers outside the Local Authority
- Department of Government and statutory bodies
- If you contact us to report concerns about a family, we may share your information with the family you have contacted us about. If you would prefer your details were not shared please tell us.

We disclose this information without your specific consent as it is reasonable and necessary to do so to fulfil our public tasks or it is otherwise in the substantial public interest to do so.

How we keep your information

The information is stored electronically, on the Council's records management systems, known as Liquid Logic EYES. Information is also securely stored in other mediums, including email accounts and in paper files.

St Helens Borough Council has retention schedules in place to ensure that information is only held for as long as it is needed.

We will not keep your information for longer than is required to by law. Following that, it will be securely disposed or deleted.

If we transfer your personal information to other countries

We do not transfer your information to countries outside of the UK.

How long we use your information for

Your information will only be held for as long as necessary to achieve the relevant purpose unless we are legally required to retain it for a specific period of time. It will only be held for the periods stated in our record retention schedule, after which it will be securely destroyed.

Automated decision making

We do not make automated decisions about you and your family.

Your responsibility to inform us of changes

It is important that the personal information we hold about you is accurate and current. Please keep us informed if your personal information changes during your working relationship with us. You can help us with this by:

- Telling us when any of your details change, and
- Telling us if any of the information we hold on you is wrong #

Your rights under the GDPR

You have a number of rights that are set out on the <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/5374/Your-data-rights>.

You have the following rights (but note, these rights do not apply in all circumstances):

- Your right to be informed about the processing of your personal information. This is the purpose of this notice.
- Your right to have your personal information corrected if it is inaccurate and to have incomplete personal information completed
- Your right to object to the processing of your personal data
- Your right to restrict processing of your personal information
- Your right to have your personal data erased ("the right to be forgotten"). As above, please note this right is subject to several restrictions, which we will discuss further with you if you choose to exercise it .
- The right to move, copy or transfer your personal information ("data portability") in some circumstances
- Rights to be notified of, object to and challenge any automated decision made in respect of you, including profiling
- Your right to request access to your personal information and information about how the Council processes it

- Your right to withdraw any consent you have given for the processing of personal data at any time

If you want to exercise any of these rights, please contact the Information Compliance Team by:

- Emailing the Information Compliance Team at dataprotection@sthelens.gov.uk
- Writing to the INSERT
- To request access to your information please complete this form <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/6526/Raise-a-subject-access-request>

Questions or complaints

If you have any questions about this privacy notice or how we handle your personal information, you can email dataprotection@sthelens.gov.uk.

You also have the right to make a complaint about how we have handled your data (or your rights around your data) at any time to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK supervisory authority for data protection issues. The ICO can be contacted by:

- Writing to the ICO, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
- Telephoning 0303 123 1113
- Online at ico.org.uk/global/contact-us(opens new window)

Links to other websites

Where this notice applies to information collected or processed on a website, please note this privacy notice only applies to the Council's website and ceases to apply when you leave our pages. If you follow links to other organisations websites, even if you follow a link which we have provided, it is suggested you take the time to read the privacy notices on the websites you visit.

Changes to this privacy notice

We keep this privacy notice under regular review, and we will provide you with a new privacy notice when we make any substantial updates. We may also notify you in other ways from time to time about the processing of your personal information.

This notice was last updated in February 2025.