



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Fostering privacy notice

This notice explains what personal data (information) we hold about you, how we collect, how we use and may share information about you. We are required to give you this information under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force on 25 May 2018.

Who we are

Bedford Borough Council collects, uses and is responsible for certain personal information about you. When we do so, we are regulated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which applies across the European Union (including in the United Kingdom). Bedford Borough Council is responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. Our Data Protection Officer is Keith Simmons.

The Fostering Service assesses prospective Special Guardians as well as approves, supports and pays Mainstream Foster Carers and Connected Persons (both herein referred to as Foster Carers). The service provides Foster Carers with ongoing support, guidance and training to ensure they are fully skilled to be effective Foster Carers. The service works with Bedford Borough Foster Carers as well as a range of alternate fostering agencies to ensure that children are placed with the most appropriate family.

Personal information we collect and use

Information collected by us

In the course of assessing prospective Special Guardians and approving and supervising Foster Carers we collect the following personal information of the adults and children of the household when you provide it to us:

- Personal information (such as name, address, contact details, date of birth, gender, language)
- Special category characteristics (such as ethnicity, disability, religion and medical information)
- Family network and relationship information
- Employment information
- Financial information

- Information relating to assessments and approvals for suitability to foster or become a Special Guardian for children

We also obtain personal information of the adults and children of the household from the following other sources:

- The local authority in whose area you live
- International social services
- Other Bedford Borough departments
- Government Agencies (including OFSTED, DVLA and Housing Associations)
- NSPCC
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Landlord
- Social media
- References (personal and past and present employers or voluntary provider and previous fostering services)
- Previous partners
- Health
- Schools
- Police

How we use your personal information

We use your personal information to:

- Process Special Guardianship and Foster Carer applications
- Assess suitability to become a Special Guardian or Foster Carer
- Monitor the progress and stability of placements, to safeguard and support children
- Provide ongoing support, advice and training to Foster Carers
- Prevent or detect crime or fraud
- Assess and evaluate our services
- Inform future service planning and the commissioning of services
- Ensure that Foster Carers receive the correct payments

How long your personal data will be kept

We keep your information securely in line with the retention periods shown below, after which time it is archived or securely destroyed, unless we are required by legal reasons to retain records for longer than the stated retention period.

Category	Retention Period
Special Guardians who are assessed and Foster carers approved by Bedford Borough – including any person with whom the child is placed (under Regulation 34 or 38 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002) and records	Date of last contact with Special Guardians or Foster Carers + 75 years

of foster parent applicants who are not approved	
Finance and procurement, financial services, payments: all records relating to the payment of foster carers	7 years
People who enquire to become a Special Guardian or Foster Carer but do not progress to a fuller assessment	7 years

Reasons we can collect and use your personal information

We collect and use your personal information to comply with our legal obligations under The Children Act, 1989, The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 and The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. If we need to collect special category (sensitive) personal information, we rely upon reasons of substantial public interest (equality of opportunity or treatment), for the provision of social care, for social security or social protection law, and for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims whenever Courts are acting in their judicial capacity.

Who we share your personal information with

- Bedford Borough teams including Finance and children's services
- Ofsted (in the event of a local authority inspection of children's services)
- other local authorities
- Fostering agencies - Regulation 26(1A) gives the fostering service undertaking the current assessment the power to request access to records about the applicant held by the fostering service or adoption agency which granted the approval (provided that the applicant consents)

We will also share personal information with law enforcement or other authorities if required by applicable law.

Your rights

Under GDPR you have rights which you can exercise free of charge which allow you to:

- Know what we are doing with your information and why we are doing it
- Ask to see what information we hold about you (subject access request)
- Ask us to correct any mistakes in the information we hold about you
- Object to direct marketing
- Make a complaint to the Information Commissioners Office
- Withdraw consent at any time (if applicable)

Depending on our reason for using your information you may also be entitled to:

- Ask us to delete information we hold about you
- Have your information transferred electronically to yourself or to another organisation
- Object to decisions being made that significantly affect you
- Object to how we are using your information
- Stop us using your information in certain ways

We will always seek to comply with your request however we may be required to hold or use your information to comply with legal duties. Please note, your request may delay or prevent us delivering a service to you.

For further information about your rights, including the circumstances in which they apply, [see the guidance from the UK Information Commissioners Office \(ICO\)](#) on individuals' rights under GDPR.

If you would like to exercise a right, please contact the Information Governance Team at dpo@bedford.gov.uk.

Keeping your personal information secure

We have appropriate security measures in place to prevent personal information from being accidentally lost, or used or accessed in an unauthorised way. We limit access to your personal information to those who have a genuine business need to know it. Those processing your information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

We also have procedures in place to deal with any suspected data security breach. We will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected data security breach where we are legally required to do so.

Contact

Please contact dpo@bedford.gov.uk to exercise any of your rights, or if you have a complaint about why your information has been collected, how it has been used or how long we have kept it for.

You can contact our Data Protection Officer, Keith Simmons, at dpo@bedford.gov.uk, or write to: Data Protection Officer, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell St, Bedford MK42 9AP

GDPR also gives you right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority. The supervisory authority in the UK is the [Information Commissioner](#) who may be contacted on 03031 231113.

Read our corporate [privacy statement](#).

