

# Your Guide

## to Data Protection 2011 – 2014



This leaflet explains how **bpha** looks after the information it holds about you.

It explains your rights under the Data Protection Act, and tells you what information we have and how we use it.

### Data Protection is important

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force in March 2000 and makes sure that organisations such as **bpha** look after the information we hold about you. **bpha** is registered under the Data Protection Act and we must comply with it.

### How we get information

Most of the information that we hold about you has been supplied by you on one of our standard forms. You may have noticed a note about data protection on some of our forms. Other information comes to us during the course of your tenancy.

### What information do we hold?

The information that we hold on our records is usually related to you as a resident. We only collect information that we genuinely need and once the information is no longer necessary, we dispose of it securely. Types of information we hold may include:

- ❖ Name
- ❖ Address
- ❖ Telephone numbers
- ❖ Present, previous and forwarding addresses
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Date of birth
- ❖ Next of kin
- ❖ Marital status and members of your household
- ❖ Rent payment details
- ❖ Bank details
- ❖ Housing benefit
- ❖ Employment details
- ❖ National insurance number
- ❖ Health and care details and issues
- ❖ Disabilities
- ❖ Ethnicity, culture or religion
- ❖ Anti-social behaviour, violence and criminal activities
- ❖ Complaints

At times we may hold other information about you, but we only do this for specific purposes. We will try to keep your information accurate and up to date. We will not keep it for longer than is necessary, however, in some instances the law sets the length of time information has to be kept.

### Using your information

We provide a wide range of services to our residents and the community, including repairs, maintenance, rents, transfers, sales and anything to do with your tenancy and property.

To do this we need to keep personal information about the people who use our services. This information helps us to:

- ❖ Plan, develop and provide services
- ❖ Assist residents who have told us about specific needs
- ❖ Deal with your account(s)
- ❖ Manage applications you make
- ❖ Provide a useful and efficient response when customers ask for help and advice
- ❖ Deal with complaints
- ❖ Fulfil our legal obligations

A lot of this information is held on computer, but we also keep information in paper filing systems and may share relevant information with our contracting partners, who share our confidentiality policy.

### Looking after your information

**bpha** will not disclose the information you provide to any unauthorised person or organisation. However, if it is appropriate, we will use the information to carry out our functions and services.

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- ❖ All records are kept securely and interviews with residents are carried out in private
- ❖ If you telephone our offices to ask about personal matters (including rent), we will ask you security questions to prove your identity

Sometimes we may have to share information for legal reasons, for example, with the police, benefits agency, and other landlords, or if it is related to anti-social behaviour, crime or fraud.

**Access to the information we hold**  
**bpha** must conform to the **Data Protection Act 1998** to ensure that the handling of all personal data (information) is managed in accordance with the Act.

The Act sets out rules for processing personal information, which applies to most paper records including housing, grants, Housing Benefit, etc. as well as those held on computer.

You have certain rights to access the information **bpha** holds about you. You have a right to:

- ❖ Know why we are collecting data about you

- ❖ Know who we share your information with
- ❖ Access the information we hold about you
- ❖ Challenge automated decisions
- ❖ Prevent direct marketing – such as residents newsletters
- ❖ In some circumstances you may be able to prevent your information from being used
- ❖ Seek compensation if you believe the data we hold has caused you damage or distress.

**Access to your personal data**  
To access your personal information you must put the request in writing to us:

**bpha**  
Pilgrims House  
Horne Lane  
Bedford MK40 1NY

Request a subject access request form by telephone: 0330 100 0272

Download a subject access request form from our website: [www.bpha.org.uk](http://www.bpha.org.uk)

- ❖ We must respond to your request within 40 days
- ❖ We will provide you with a copy of the information you have requested

- ❖ We reserve the right to charge an administration fee of £10.
- ❖ We will ask you to provide proof of identity before disclosing any information
- ❖ In some circumstances we can refuse to disclose some information, if this is the case, it will be explained to you

### What if the information we hold is wrong?

If you believe the information we hold about you is wrong, you have the right to ask us to change it or, in some cases, delete it.

### More information

For more information about the Data Protection Act (1998), please visit the Information Commissioners website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

**If you need this leaflet in any other formats, please contact us: 0330 100 0272**