

How we use your personal information

We collect and use information about you to help solve your problems, improve our services, and tackle wider issues in society that affect people's lives.

We always let you decide what you're comfortable telling us, explain why we need your information and keep it confidential. When we keep something you tell us, we:

- only access it when we have a good reason
- only share what is necessary and relevant
- don't sell it to commercial organisations

How will you use my data?

First and foremost your information will be used to provide you with advice. We also use information in a way that doesn't directly identify you to understand how different problems are affecting society and to take action to tackle these problems. As this is used for research it is kept separate from your case record.

Where you have given us your permission and contact details, we, or in some instances a trusted research partner, may contact you to ask you for feedback on the service you received and your overall experience of Citizens Advice.

Do I have to give my consent for you to use information about me?

You can decide exactly what information you are happy to tell us. We'll use the information because we have a 'legitimate interest' in doing so for the purpose of providing you with advice and carrying out research.

When we ask for more private information about you, like any health conditions or ethnicity, we will need to get your consent. This is because this information is treated in a special way by the law. You can always withdraw this consent and request we remove what you told us.

Where/how will you store my data?

The record of your application along with all linked correspondence and monitoring data will be stored securely on Citizens Advice Somerset's IT system.

We ensure all information is stored securely and only accessed when there's a good reason by staff of Citizens Advice Somerset.

How long do you keep records for?

We keep records for a minimum of 6 years.

Why might you share my information? Who will you share it with?

We will generally not share information without your permission, unless required to do so by law or in some very limited situations, like to protect you or someone else from serious harm.

If a particular service involves sharing your information without permission, we will always let you know upfront that it isn't confidential.

What if I have a question about how my information has been used?

You can contact us and ask us:

- what information we've stored about you and get a copy to keep
- to change or update your information
- to delete your information from our records or withdraw your consent
- to stop using your information

If you have any questions about how your information is collected or used, you can contact us at:

Citizens Advice Somerset
St Mary's House
Magdalene Street
TAUNTON TA1 1SB

You can read more detailed information about how some of our services use information on our national site: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/privacy-policy

If you're not happy with how we have used your information, you can contact us at: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/Contact-us-form

You can also contact the Information Commissioner's Office to raise a concern about how we have used your information – www.ico.org.uk/ or 0303 123 1113.