

## **Data Protection Policy**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council needs to collect and use certain types of information about the people we deal with. These include current, past and prospective employees, suppliers, clients/customers and others with whom we communicate. The Council is also occasionally required by law to collect and use this sort of information to comply with government requirements to provide them with information such as business data. This personal information must be dealt with properly however it is collected, recorded and used - whether on paper, in a computer, or recorded on other material - and there are safeguards to ensure this in the Data Protection Act 1998.

The lawful and correct treatment of personal information by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is very important to our successful operations, and to the maintenance of confidence between us and those we deal with. We therefore seek to ensure that the Council treats all personal information lawfully and correctly.

To this end we fully endorse and adhere to the Principles of Data Protection, as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Specifically, the principles require that personal information:

- shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met;
- shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes;
- shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed;
- shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or purposes;
- shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act;
- 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.
- appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data;

Therefore, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will, through appropriate management and strict application of criteria and controls:

- observe fully the conditions regarding the fair collection and use of information;
- meet its legal obligations to specify the purposes for which information is used;
- collect and process appropriate information and only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements;
- ensure the quality of information used;

- apply strict checks to determine the length of time information is held;
- ensure that the rights of people about whom the information is held, are able to be fully exercised under the Act. (These include the right to be informed that processing is being undertaken, the right of access to one's personal information, the right to prevent processing in certain circumstances and the right to correct, rectify, block or erase information which is regarded as wrong information);
- take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information;
- ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards.

In addition Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will ensure that:

- there is someone with specific responsibility for Data Protection in the organisation. (Currently, the nominated person is the Chief Internal Auditor in the Resources Department);
- everyone managing and handling personal information is issued with the Code of Practice for the use of IT Services, and understands that they are contractually responsible for following good Data Protection practice as described in the Code;
- everyone managing and handling personal information is appropriately trained and supervised;
- anybody wanting to make enquiries about handling personal information knows what to do;
- queries about handling personal information are promptly and courteously dealt with;
- methods of handling personal information are clearly described by the managers responsible for that information;
- a regular review and audit is made of the way personal information is managed;
- methods and performance standards of handling personal information are regularly assessed and evaluated;
- the secure retention and destruction arrangements for personal information are kept under review in accordance with BS7799

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