

At Citizens Advice we collect and use your personal information to help solve your problems, improve our services and tackle wider issues in society that affect people's lives.

We only ask for the information we need. We always let you decide what you're comfortable telling us, explain why we need it and treat it as confidential.

When we record and use your personal information we:

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

We collect and use the details you give us so we can help you. We have a 'legitimate interest' to do this under data protection law. This means it lets us carry out our aims and goals as an organisation. We'll always explain how we use your information.

At times we might use or share your information without your permission. If we do, we'll always make sure there's a legal basis for it. This could include situations where we have to use or share your information:

- to comply with the law - for example, if a court orders us to share information. This is called 'legal obligation'
- to protect someone's life - for example, sharing information with a paramedic if a client was unwell at our office. This is called 'vital interests'
- to carry out our legitimate aims and goals as a charity - for example, to create statistics for our national research. This is called 'legitimate interests'
- for us to carry out a task where we're meeting the aims of a public body in the public interest - for example, delivering a government or local authority service. This is called 'public task'
- to carry out a contract we have with you - for example, if you're an employee we might need to store your bank details so we can pay you. This is called 'contract'
- to defend our legal rights - for example, sharing information with our legal advisors if there was a complaint that we gave the wrong advice

We handle and store your personal information in line with the law - including the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

You can check our [main Citizens Advice policy](#) for how we handle most of your personal information.

This page covers how we, as your local charity, handle your information locally in our offices.

## How Citizens Advice Maidstone collect your data

We'll only ask for information that's relevant to your problem. Depending on what you want help with, this might include:

- your name and contact details - so we can keep in touch with you about your case
- personal information - for example about family, work, or financial circumstances, or if you're vulnerable or at risk of harm
- details about services you get that are causing you problems - like energy or post
- details of items or services you've bought and traders you've dealt with
- information like your gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation

We occasionally ask for details about someone else like a neighbour or your partner so we can deal with an enquiry. We'll only do this if we have a legitimate interest in the information, or we need it to protect someone's life.

If you don't want to give us certain information, you don't have to. For example, if you want to stay anonymous we'll only record information about your problem and make sure you're not identified.

### How we collect your information

On the phone, we will ask you questions about yourself, and if you visit our offices we will also ask you to complete a form which will contain questions about you.

### What information we collect

We will ask you questions about your personal characteristics, eg health, race, sexuality and others. These are known as special category data and knowing about them will help us to give you specific advice about the issue you are enquiring about.

### What we use your information for

We use this information to make sure we give you the most relevant advice, and also so that we can see that we are delivering a good service for all members of Maidstone's community

Our confidentiality policy

Local Citizens Advice provide a confidential service to clients.

**Nothing learned during the course of dealing with a client (including the fact that an enquiry has been made) will be passed to anyone outside the service without the client's permission, other than in exceptional circumstances with an appropriate lawful basis and where documented.**

At Citizens Advice we have a confidentiality policy which states that anything you tell us as part of advice will not be shared outside of the Citizens Advice network unless you provide your permission for us to do so.

There are some exceptions to this such as needing to share:

- to prevent an immediate risk of harm to an individual
- In select circumstances if it is in the best interests of the client
- where we are compelled to do so by law (e.g. a court order or meeting statutory disclosures)
- where there is an overriding public interest such as to prevent harm against someone or to investigate a crime
- to defend against a complaint or legal claim
- to protect our name and reputation for example to provide our side of a story reported in the press

Who we share your information with

We share data with a number of organisations, where you have been referred into our service by them, and only with your consent.

Our lawful basis for using your information is **Article 9(2)(g) - substantial public interest**

## How we use your data for research, feedback and statistics

This section covers how we use your data to carry out our research, feedback and statistical work..

National Citizens Advice covers their use of data for this purpose in their [privacy notice](#).

How we collect your information

We collect your information when we talk to you on the telephone, and when There is a lot of information about how we collect and use data in our national policy, available [here](#)

We also collect information about you when you use our email form, and use your contact details to send a secure email via Docusign. We will ask your permission to store your data as part of the email form, when you submit it.

Our lawful basis for using your information is **Article 9(2)(g) - substantial public interest**

## What Citizens Advice Maidstone ask for

To find out what information we ask for, [see our national Citizens Advice privacy policy](#)

## How Citizens Advice Maidstone store your information

You can check our [main Citizens Advice policy](#) for how we handle most of your personal information.

We store your email information in our local system and do not share it with anyone without your permission

## How Citizens Advice Maidstone share your information

### **Working on your behalf**

When you give us authority to act on your behalf, for example to help you with a Universal Credit claim, we'll need to share information with that third party.

This may include the local authority, local housing associations or national government departments amongst others.

We may, with your permission, pass your details to solicitors or other professional organisations who are working with us to help clients, if we cannot help you ourselves.

## Contact Citizens Advice Maidstone about your information

If you have any questions about how your information is collected or used, you can contact our office.

Telephone: 01622 750770 open Monday to Friday 10 - 4

Email: [manager@maidstonecab.org.uk](mailto:manager@maidstonecab.org.uk)

You can contact us to:

- find out what personal information we hold about you
- correct your information if it's wrong, out of date or incomplete
- request we delete your information
- ask us to limit what we do with your data - for example, ask us not to share it if you haven't asked us already
- ask us to give you a copy of the data we hold in a format you can use to transfer it to another service
- ask us stop using your information

## Who's responsible for looking after your personal information

The national Citizens Advice charity and your local Citizens Advice operate a system called Casebook to keep your personal information safe. This means they're a 'joint data controller' for your personal information that's stored in our Casebook system.

Each local Citizens Advice is an independent charity, and a member of the national Citizens Advice charity. The Citizens Advice membership agreement also requires that the use of your information complies with data protection law.

You can [find out more about your data rights on the Information Commissioner's website.](#)