

Bedford Borough Fostering Service Data Protection Privacy Statement

To deliver services to the citizens and communities in Bedford Borough, it is necessary for the Council to collect, gather, and process personal data about residents, staff, and other individuals. Bedford Borough Council is committed to protecting your personal data when you use its services and/or correspond with it.

The Council has registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office. This registration can be viewed on the [ICO website](#) (opens in a new window) Registration Number Z5916725.

As a Data Controller, the Council sets out the purposes and methods for processing information and ensures safeguards over any personal and special category information it processes.

The sections below explain what data we are collecting and storing and the arrangements we have in place to protect the information entrusted to the Council.

In relation to Fostering, Bedford Borough Council will process your personal data for the following purposes:

The Fostering Service assesses prospective Special Guardians and approves, supports and pays Mainstream Foster Carers and Connected Persons, referred to in this notice 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 alternative agencies to ensure that children are placed with the most appropriate family.

The personal data that will be collected:

- Personal information (such as name, address, contact details, date of birth, gender, language)
- 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

Bedford Borough Council is processing this personal data by virtue of the following Lawful Basis:

Compliance with a legal obligation - Article 6(1)(c) UK GDPR

Performance of a task carried out in the public interest - Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR

The special category data that will be collected:

- Ethnicity
- Disability information
- Religion
- Medical information

Special category data is processed where necessary for reasons of substantial public interest, in accordance with Article 9(2)(g) UK GDPR and Schedule 1 Part 2 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018, where this is necessary for the Council to carry out its statutory functions.

Where special category data is processed for health or social care purposes, this is processed under Article 9(2)(h) UK GDPR and Schedule 1 Part 1 paragraph 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

We may also collect and process personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences where this is necessary for the Council to carry out its statutory fostering functions. This processing is carried out in accordance with Article 10 UK GDPR, supported by Schedule 1 Part 2 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant fostering legislation.

Local authorities rely on statutory provisions which confer implied and express data processing powers across a broad range of legislation when supporting children in need. Specific laws in relation to local authority - supported Fostering include:

- Children Act 1989
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 -Regulation 30 (Case records relating to foster carers and others), Regulation 31 (Register of foster carers), and Regulation 32 (Retention and confidentiality of records)
- Special Guardianship Regulations 2005
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards
- Fostering Network -Transfer of Foster Carer protocol England (2014) (Reviewed 2019)
- The Children Act 2004, sections 11 and 16E
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 115
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Criminal Justice Act 2003, section 325
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 - Section 54
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance (March 2026)
- Information Sharing Advice to practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers May 2024
- Caldicott Review of Information Governance 2013

Personal data provided for Fostering may be shared with, or obtained from, the following organisations:

- 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
- Publicly available social media, where relevant and proportionate
- References (personal and past and present employers or voluntary provider and previous fostering services)
- Previous partners
- Health Services / Professionals
- Schools and Education Providers
- Police
- We may also share your information with other organisations and service providers who support us in delivering children's social care services and who process personal information on our behalf, we will only do this if we have gained your consent or under appropriate contractual and data protection safeguards.
- In addition, disclosure may be required by a Court of Law or in response to a valid request by a law enforcement agency.

We are guided by the following principles when sharing data

1. Safety over privacy: A child's safety and well-being always come first.
2. Consent is not mandatory: we do not need consent to share data if a child faces a risk of harm or if information is required in line with the law.
3. Seek expert advice: we will consult a manager or data protection lead if we feel unsure about sharing.
4. Share relevant data: We only share relevant and accurate information with individuals and only share the information they need to support the provision of their services.

We keep your information securely in line with the retention periods shown on page 4 of this privacy statement, 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
Records relating to assessed Special Guardians, approved Foster Carers, persons with whom a child is placed under the Council's fostering functions, and foster parent applicants who are not approved.	75 years from the date of last contact with the Special Guardian, Foster Carer or applicant.
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

Your personal data will be held by/for the Council within the UK or the EU. Where service providers store or access information from outside the UK, the Council will ensure appropriate safeguards are in place in accordance with UK GDPR.

The information you provide is required as part of the Council's statutory fostering and special guardianship functions. Without this information, we may not be able to assess your suitability as a Foster Carer or Special Guardian or progress your application.

The processing of your information does **not** involve automated decision-making.

The Council has appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to protect your personal data against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage.

Bedford Borough Council is the Data Controller processing your information, who can be contacted as follows:

Information Governance
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford MK42 9AP
Email: dpo@bedford.gov.uk

If you wish to enquire about your rights as a data subject, whether you wish to request a copy of your information that Bedford Borough Council holds, request for data portability; rectification or erasure of your data for any reason or objection to any processing, please get in touch with the Council's GDPR Data Protection Officer by emailing dpo@bedford.gov.uk or writing to the above address. Some individual rights may be limited where processing is necessary to comply with a legal obligation or to perform a task carried out in the public interest.

Alternatively, in the event that you remain dissatisfied with the way Bedford Borough Council has handled the processing of your information (i.e. after liaising with the Council to find a satisfactory solution), you have the right to contact the UK's Statutory Authority: The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who can be contacted by using the details displayed at the bottom of the page entitled [Personal information and your rights | Bedford Borough Council](#) on our website under the "Challenging the response" heading.

We keep this Privacy Notice under regular review, and we will place any updates on its Internet site. This Notice was last updated in August 2026.