

Privacy Notice

Introduction

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is a registered Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our registration number is Z9715836.

This Privacy Notice describes how we collect and process the personal data of people who engage with our Bureau. It also explains people's rights and how to contact us.

Please send any questions about how we use personal information to DPO@CAS.org.uk.

About Us

Citizens Advice Scotland, including the Extra Help Unit, working together with the 59 individual Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) form Scotland's largest independent advice network. We are charities working across Scotland. Our advice is available to everyone and is free, independent, confidential and impartial. We also advocate for changes to legislation and social policy that will improve people's circumstances locally and across Scotland.

The Extra Help Unit (EHU) is managed by CAS and helps people resolve problems with their energy supplier and works to raise standards across the industry. This Privacy Notice covers non-EHU related data processing. [Click here if you would like to read the EHU Privacy Notice](#).

Citizens Advice Bureaux use a case management system called CASTLE and are Joint Controllers for the personal data held on systems managed by CAS. Where you have accessed services from a CAB you should refer to their Privacy Notice on their website. You can find contact details using our [Find a Bureau tool](#).

Information we collect about you

Personal data is any information that identifies or relates to a specific person.

If you contact us with an enquiry

- Personal details such as name and contact information
- Details about your enquiry

CAS does not provide advice. We are often contacted by people who are trying to reach their local Bureau. In these circumstances we will try and make sure your enquiry gets to the right place to get you the support you need. We may process the below data as a Joint Controller of CASTLE or while managing National Projects.

- Additional personal details such as Date of Birth or National Insurance Number
- Information about your circumstances such as financial circumstances, benefits you receive, employment and housing status
- Demographics data that you provide us with
- If you have agreed to be contacted for feedback or communications
- Personal data of people in your household, for example, if you have children or are a carer
- If someone is seeking advice on your behalf, we may collect their details too

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We may also collect special category data or other sensitive information when necessary:

- Information that may inform the advice we provide, such as health conditions
- Demographics data that you provide us with
- Criminal activity data that may inform the advice and support we provide

National Projects

National Projects are projects managed by CAS and delivered by Bureaux across the Scottish Citizens Advice Network. Referrals to National Projects may be made to CAS and redirected to a Bureau for support.

If you donate or fundraise for us

Your donations provide vital support to help us continue our essential work. When you fundraise or donate to us, we may collect:

- Personal details, such as name and contact information
- Details of your donation or fundraising
- UK tax payer status (if you make a Gift Aid declaration)

How we collect your information

We may collect your information:

- When you contact us including in person, by phone, videocall, webchat, email, letter or through our website
- From systems we use to support our work, such as appointment booking systems
- When you, or a third party, provides us with documentation
- From an organisation that referred you
- From someone acting on your behalf
- When you complete a survey or provide us feedback
- on CCTV when you attend our premises
- via cookies on our website
- when you make a donation to us, including through fundraising sites, such as JustGiving

CAS operates the Scottish Citizens Advice Helpline. If you call this helpline, you will be directed to an adviser in your local Citizens Advice Bureaux.

We have a ChatBot available on our Money Talk Team website to support with initial signposting and to contact an adviser. There is a [supplementary Privacy Notice](#) for this.

We use social media to raise awareness of our services and promote our impact, and we are occasionally contacted this way with queries. To protect your personal information, we encourage you to contact us via other methods and we will seek agreement from you to transfer your personal information from social media to our systems.

How we use your information

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We may use your information to:

- Contact you to support with your enquiry and explain how we can help
- Support you in accessing our services, such as through British Sign Language or interpretation services
- Keep records for audit, standards, and insurance purposes
- Share information with other organisations, such as for referrals
- Report statistics or anonymised case studies to funders
- Develop and improve our services
- Manage donations and claim Gift Aid
- Send communications
- Ask for your feedback on our services

We also use your data to monitor the issues that are impacting the people we help across the Scottish Citizens Advice Network. This informs our work advocating for changes to legislation and social policy. We do this through data analysis; however, we may use your experiences to inform our case studies. These will be anonymised. Occasionally we may ask to share your story to bring awareness to an issue, we will only do this when you have given consent.

Our lawful basis for using your information

We only process your personal data when there is a lawful basis for us doing so. We may rely upon:

- legitimate interests, such as for maintaining records of advice and support, to defend legal claims, and to maintain a high-quality service
- public task, when we are delivering a statutory service
- legal obligation, when we need to process your data to meet a legal obligation
- your consent, such as when we contact you for feedback or refer you to another support organisation

Where we process special category data (such as health information), we may rely upon:

- substantial public interest conditions
- defence of legal claims
- archiving, research and statistics
- your explicit consent

When relying on substantial public interest conditions in Schedule 1 Part 2 of the DPA 2018 we are required to have an [Appropriate Policy Document](#) in place.

Who we share your information with

We only share your personal data when necessary and in line with data protection laws.

- if we need to share your information with Bureaux
- with professional advisors such as insurers and legal professionals
- with auditors to maintain standards, such as for CAS Membership Standards audits, or with the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) for Scottish National Standards accreditation

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- with funders as part of audit and compliance, or for research and reporting purposes. We anonymise this where possible
- to meet any legal and regulatory obligations
- If we use external service providers, we put in place contracts to ensure they follow data protection rules

We may share information with the following, only when you have consented:

- If we refer you to another organisation for support
- If we engage with an organisation on your behalf, we may have to share information with them
- with funding partners to obtain feedback on our service provision
- with HMRC if you make a Gift Aid declaration as part of your donation

In exceptional circumstances, where there is a high risk of harm to an individual, information may be shared with third parties. We have strict Safeguarding procedures in place for when this may occur.

Will we share your information outside of the UK?

We only store personal data in the UK or the EU.

However, some of our suppliers may be based in other countries. If we need to share your data with these companies, we take steps to make sure your data is protected.

How long we keep your information

We will only keep your data for as long as is necessary. For most people we keep your data for a maximum of seven years. This is from the point of last contact. We keep recordings of phone calls for two years.

In certain circumstances we are required to keep records for longer, for example, if you have arranged a debt remedy solution, your records are kept for the duration this is active.

In rare cases, we might keep your data for longer if there is a legal reason, such as an on-going complaint or legal case.

National Projects

National Projects are projects delivered by Bureaux across the Citizens Advice Network and managed by CAS. Where you seek support from one of these projects, you may receive advice from an adviser based in a Bureaux somewhere in Scotland. Some projects have a Privacy Notice which supplements this one, these are linked below:

- [Patient Advice and Support Service Scotland \(PASS\)](#)
- [Pension Wise](#)
- [Scotland's Migration Service \(SMS\)](#)

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Your rights

You have rights over your personal data. You can:

- Request a copy of your personal information
- Ask us to update anything that's no longer accurate
- Request that we delete your personal data. There are some exceptions, and we may need to keep some of your data, for example to defend legal claims
- Object to how we use data in some situations
- Request to restrict how your data is used
- Withdraw your consent

We do not use any automation or profiling to make decisions.

If you're unhappy with how we have handled your data, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at ico.org.uk.

Last updated: June 2025