**How we collect personal information**

We collect information in a variety of ways including using this website (see Information we collect via this website and Cookies); on various forms, tenancy agreements, and contracts; through our on- going contact with you;

When you apply to access VHA services, we request and hold on file any references necessary to assess your application including as appropriate (but not limited to) references from other housing providers/private landlords, your mortgage lender (if you own/have owned your own home), the Police, the Probation Service, support workers, social workers, mental health workers and credit reference agencies.

If you provide us with personal information relating to members of your family or your associates we will assume that you do so with their knowledge and their consent to the collection and processing of the information.

It is important that you notify us of any changes to your personal information.

**Who the personal information relates to:**

We collect personal information about:

Customers ◦ This includes current, former and potential customers, who live in our properties or access our support and other services, and could also include their family and people associated with them.

Colleagues ◦This includes current, former and potential colleagues, as well as Board and Committee members, apprentices and volunteers.

Anyone who makes a complaint or enquiry and visitors to our website and offices

**How we use this information**

We will collect, process, share and securely store personal information in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

All information will be retained in accordance with the requirements of our retention schedule.

We keep these records to allow us to:

Make allocations

Manage tenancies

Receive rent and service charges

Ensure bills and benefits are accurate and paid accordingly

Provide a repairs and maintenance service

Provide home ownership products

Offer help with debts and benefits

Provide Support services which help customers achieve their goals

Prevent & detect crime and resolve disputes

Promote safety and the quiet enjoyment of our neighbourhoods & communities

Engage with customers and make improvements to our products and services

Promote equal opportunities and fair treatment for all colleagues and customers

Provide employment and training advice and opportunities

Manage employment and colleague development

Work with partners to deliver mutual success

Provide information (e.g. about products and services) you request from us

**Sensitive personal information**

Under the Data Protection Act certain personal information is classified as “sensitive”. Sensitive data is information relating to physical or mental health, sex life, religious or philosophical beliefs, political opinions, membership of a Trade Union, allegations of criminal offences and criminal convictions and offences. We minimise our holding and use of sensitive categories of personal information but, given the services we provide and our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, there are times when we use it, for example when providing accommodation for disabled persons or those with problems around substance abuse, when resolving neighbourhood disputes involving alleged criminal activity or when helping someone to access care services.

When we collect specific sensitive data we will notify you of how we will use it, including who it may be shared with.

**Job applicants and former colleagues**

Personal information about unsuccessful candidates will be held for 6 months after the recruitment exercise has been completed, it will then be destroyed or deleted. We retain de-personalised statistical information about applicants to help inform our recruitment activities, but no individuals are identifiable from that data.

Once a person has taken up employment with VHA, we will compile a file relating to their employment. The information contained in this will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to that person’s employment. Once their employment with us has ended, we will retain the file in accordance with the requirements of our retention schedule and then delete it.

**Complaints or enquiries**

We try to meet the highest standards in all areas of our business. We take any complaints we receive about this very seriously. We welcome any suggestions for improving our procedures. If you do make a complaint or enquiry we may collect and store personal information in relation to this matter, we will keep it secure and use it only for the purpose it was collected. When the matter is resolved or completed, we will retain the details in accordance with our retention schedule and then destroy them.

**Information we collect via the website**

We collect and store personal information via this website for a number of reasons – see above – including to help us provide better services and products to customers and potential customers. The information we collect fits into two categories:

1. Personal information entered into online forms by visitors to this website.

2. Anonymous statistical information collected by cookies.

If you request a publication, call back or information from us via an email, online form or register your interest in a service we will use your information to fulfil that request.

**Use of cookies**

**Sharing your information**

Your personal information will be kept secure and confidential. Usually we will not disclose personal data without consent but we may share information with contractors or third parties and other agencies we work with, including Local Authorities, Social Services, Police, other social landlords and other agencies when VHA believes it is in your or the public’s interest to do so, or as required by law.

Examples of organisations we may share your information with, where appropriate, are:

Contractors

Local Authorities

Housing Benefit

DWP

Social services

Police

Probation Service

Other landlords

Utilities companies

Council tax

Debt recovery agency

Courts

Payroll bureau

Pensions Companies

Job Centre Plus

HMRC

Printers

Fire Service

Support agencies

Health services

In particular, please be aware:

Current or forwarding addresses may be shared with utility companies and Council Tax offices to ensure billing details are correct.

If you default upon any tenancy/licence conditions information about you may be provided to authorised debt recovery agencies, to enable them to recover the debt. This may affect future applications for tenancies, credit and insurance.

We may discuss your financial situation, rent payments (including any arrears) and any claims made for welfare benefits with; an external debt advice agency, Welfare rights advisor, the housing benefit department or the local authorities housing advice and homeless prevention team to make sure that benefits are paid correctly.

We will not share your personal information without your consent, unless allowed by law.

We may share customers’ personal information on a collective basis with other organisations to help us gain insights in to our customer base, so we can target and deliver our services in a way that maximises benefits for our customers. Whenever we do this, we will ensure that your personal information is handled under strictly controlled conditions and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

**Accessing your information**

Please contact us using your preferred contact method if you would like copies of some specific information from your files, and we will try to provide it as quickly as possible.

If you require a substantial amount of your personal information, there is a formal process for this, under the Data Protection Act, known as a Subject Access Request (SAR).

What you need to know about making a Subject Access Request:

You can write to us or email us with your request, or download the SAR form for your convenience, which you can post or email back to us. Please write to .

We may require proof of your identity and address – we will let you know this when we receive your request. There is more information on this on the SAR Form (link above.)

When we receive your valid request – with proof of id/address if required- we will respond and provide your information within 40 calendar days at the latest.

You can request to see any of the information that we may hold about you, including CCTV images, but the more specific you can be about what you require, the quicker we can respond to your request.

If you are requesting CCTV footage of yourself, please specify the time, date and location of the footage, and supply a clear photograph so that we can find you on the footage.

Please be aware that we may need to edit some information out, if it relates to other people, as we must protect the privacy rights of all individuals.

If you have any queries about accessing your information please contact

**Security of information**

**Changes to our privacy policy**

This privacy notice will be updated to reflect changes either to the way in which we operate or changes to the data protection legislation. To make sure that you keep up to date, we suggest that you revisit this notice from time to time.

**Links to other websites**

The notice is limited to this website only. If you follow a link to an external site, we recommend that you check the privacy notice of that site before giving any personal details.

**Contacting us**

We welcome any queries you may have regarding this Privacy Notice, or any information we hold about you. Please contact us at