 **Privacy notice – Foster Carers**

You have a legal right to be informed about how the Together Trust uses any personal information that we hold about you. To fulfil this, we provide a ‘privacy notice’.

Personal information is any information that relates to you that can be used directly or indirectly to identify you. This includes information such as your name, date of birth and address. This may also include sensitive personal information, such as your religion or medical details, photos and video recordings.

This notice explains how we collect, store and use personal data about our Foster Carers, like you.

**Who we are**

**The Together Trust** is a charity that offers care, support and special education to children, adults and families.

### The Together Trust provides **Fostering** services, which aim to support foster carers provide safe, caring homes for children who need them.

The Together Trust has a Data Protection Officer under the GDPR who can be contacted; By email: dataprotection@togethertrust.org.uk

Or by writing: DPO, Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE

**The personal data we hold**

In the course of approving and supervising foster carers we collect the following personal information when you provide it to us.

* Name, address, identification documents, contact information
* Date of birth and sex.
* Family network and relationships information
* Assessment Information
* Safeguarding information (information relating to assessments and approvals for suitability to foster children)
* Financial circumstances and details
* Photographs
* references

We also collect, use, store and share (when appropriate) information about you that falls into "special categories" of personal data. This refers to information, which is more sensitive to you and therefore needs greater protection from us. This includes, but is not restricted to:

* Information about your characteristics, like your ethnic background, religion
* Information about any medical conditions or disabilities
* Sexual life and orientation

We may also hold data that we have received from other organisations, including Local Authorities, Fostering Agencies, Police, Disclosure and Barring Service, Health, References

**Why we use this data**

We use this data to:

* process foster carer applications
* assess suitability to become a foster carer
* monitor the progress and stability of placements, to safeguard and support children
* provide ongoing support, advice and training to foster carers
* prevent or detect crime or fraud
* assess and evaluate our services
* inform future service planning and the commissioning of services
* ensure that foster carers receive the correct payments.

**Our legal basis for using this data**

We only collect and use personal data when the law allows us to. Most commonly, we process it where:

* We have a legal obligation (such as the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011)
* We have contractual obligations to you and to notify you about changes to our services.
* We have a legitimate interest (i.e. to improve our service care)

Less commonly, we may also process personal data in situations where:

* We have obtained consent from you to use it in a certain way
* We need to protect the individual’s (or another persons’) vital interests (i.e. in a medical emergency).

Where we have obtained consent to use individuals personal data (i.e. photographs), this consent can be withdrawn at any time. We will make this clear when we ask for consent, and explain how consent can be withdrawn.

**Our basis for using special category data**

For ‘special category’ data (more sensitive personal information), we only collect and use it when we have both a lawful basis, as set out above, and one of the following conditions for processing as set out in data protection law:

* We have obtained your explicit consent to use your information in a certain way
* We need to protect an individual’s vital interests (i.e. protect your life or someone else’s life), in situations where you’re physically or legally incapable of giving consent
* The information has already been made obviously public by you
* We need to use it to make or defend against legal claims
* We need to use it for public health reasons, and it’s used by, or under the direction of, a professional obliged to confidentiality under law

**Collecting this information**

While the majority of information we collect about individuals is mandatory, there is some information that can be provided voluntarily.

Whenever we seek to collect information, we make it clear whether providing it is mandatory or optional. If it is mandatory, we will explain the possible consequences of not complying.

**How we store this data**

We keep personal information about you whilst you are a Foster Carer with the Together Trust. We also keep it after you leave for a minimum of 10 years, in order for us to comply with our legal responsibilities.

In general, we will try to keep data only for as long as we need it and will securely destroy it afterwards.

You can request our full retention schedule by contacting our Data Protection Officer.

**Who we share data with**

We do not share information about you with any third party without consent, unless the law and our policies allow us to do so.

Where it is legally required, or necessary (and it complies with data protection law) we may share personal information with:

* Our regulator Ofsted
* Local Authorities
* The Fostering Network
* Social Care Network (who hosts our online management solution CHARMS)
* Probation Services
* Health Authorities
* Suppliers and service providers – (such as IT systems or cloud storage providers). We have a contract with these services to make sure your personal data will be kept securely and only in agreement with the Together Trust’s rules.

 **Transferring data internationally**

If we ever have to transfer personal data to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, we will do so in accordance with data protection law.

**Individual’s rights regarding personal data**

You have a right to make a request to see the personal information that we hold about you. This is called a ‘subject access request’.

If we do hold information we will:

* Give you a description of it
* Tell you why we are holding and processing it, and how long we will keep it for
* Explain where we got it from, if not from you
* Tell you who it has been, or will be, shared with
* Let you know whether any automated decision-making is being applied to the data, and any consequences of this
* Give you a copy of the information within 30 days

Individuals also have the right for their personal information to be passed electronically to other organisations in certain circumstances.

**Other rights**

You also have other rights regarding how your personal data is used and kept safe. This includes the right to:

* Say that you don’t want your personal information to be used
* Stop it being used to send you marketing materials
* Say that you don’t want it to be used for automated decisions (decisions made by a computer or machine, rather than by a person)
* In certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data corrected, deleted or destroyed, or restrict processing
* Make a complaint to the Information Commissioner’s Office or claim compensation if the data protection rules are broken and this harms you in some way

The Together Trust has produced a guide [‘Know you rights’](https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Know%20your%20rights%20V2.pdf) to explain these in more detail. To exercise any of these rights please contact our Data Protection Officer.

**Complaints**

We take any complaints about our collection and use of your personal information very seriously.

If you think that our collection or use of your personal information is unfair, misleading or inappropriate, or have any other concern, please raise this with us in the first instance by contacting our Data Protection Officer.

You can also make a complaint to the Information Commissioner’s Office:

* Report a concern online at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
* Call 0303 123 1113
* Or write to: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane,

Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

**Contact us**

If you have any questions or would like more information about anything mentioned in this privacy notice, please contact our Data Protection Officer:

* By email: dataprotection@togethertrust.org.uk
* Or by writing: DPO, Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE