
HARC Privacy Statement

This Privacy Statement sets out how HARC has introduced a range of measures to ensure that the personal information (data) relating to the clients that use HARC's advice service is protected and what rights clients have been given under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations.

What Personal Information does HARC Collect and Why?

HARC provides a specialist welfare benefit advice service and needs to collect personal and often sensitive information from people, who ask for advice and assistance, which is relevant to their benefit entitlement. Advice enquiries can be made in person, by letter, by telephone or by email. Personal information is not always recorded. However, for more detailed advice and assistance it will be essential to obtain and make use of the information that is necessary to provide high quality advice but HARC will only seek what is required to deal with the benefit claim or entitlement.

Where does this information come from?

This information will be requested from people who contact HARC for advice and may be held as forms, letters and documents or in electronic form. In addition client information may be provided by another organisation that is giving the client advice or support or by an agency that is responsible for benefit claims.

How does HARC obtain client consent?

HARC will seek client authorisation to pass whatever client information is necessary to another organisation or agency. This may be a signed form or may be a request made during a telephone conversation.

HARC will refer clients to this Privacy Statement, which is posted on the HARC website www.harcuk.com or can provide a hard copy if requested.

What other organisations does HARC share client information with?

HARC may need to share client information with another general or specialist advice organisation (such as a Citizens Advice Bureau) or with an organisation that is providing support to the client or to an agency that administers benefits (such as the Department for Work and Pensions). This will only be done if it will enable HARC to provide effective advice and assist the client with their benefit query or claim.

In addition, HARC may share client information with an organisation that has been checked and appointed by HARC to carry out a survey of how clients view the advice work they have received or, on very rare occasions, where HARC is required to provide information about a client by law.

How does HARC ensure that client information is kept secure?

During 2018, HARC reviewed and has made substantial improvements to the way that it keeps client information, whether in hard copy or in electronic form, to ensure that it fully meets the GDPR requirements.

HARC will only share information with another organisation if HARC is satisfied that the organisation has procedures in place to ensure the client information is kept secure and complies with the GDPR.

What are the main rights that clients have over the personal information that HARC has obtained?

Clients can:

- Ask HARC to tell them what personal information about them HARC holds and request copies of this information.
- Ask HARC to correct any information that the client believes is incorrect or needs to be updated.
- Ask HARC to stop using some information or to stop sharing information with another organisation.

More details about these rights are available from the Information Commissioner's Office and website www.ico.org.uk

What happens to client information after their advice enquiry has been dealt with?

HARC usually keeps a client information file for up to 3 years after the enquiry has been dealt with or the case has been closed. At that point the information is destroyed and/or deleted from the HARC electronic files.

How can queries or complaints about this matter be made?

Contact HARC for more information about client data (information) security and the GDPR regulations.

To take up one of the rights mentioned above or to complain about how HARC has handled a matter relating to the client's personal information that it holds:

Contact the HARC Data Protection Officer by telephone [tel: 01424 428375] by email [info@harcuk.com] or by post to HARC [at the address above].

HARC will make every effort to deal with this enquiry and resolve any concerns but if the client is still dissatisfied they can contact the Information Commissioner's Office.