

Privacy Notice for Clients and Users of Our Legal Services

This privacy notice explains how Mary Ward Legal Centre collects, uses and shares your personal data when you contact us, receive legal advice or representation from us, are referred to or from our services, provide feedback, or make a complaint.

Updating this notice

We may update this notice from time to time. Where appropriate, we will take steps to bring any significant changes to your attention. This notice was last updated in July 2026.

Data controller and contact details

Mary Ward Legal Centre is the controller of your personal data. Our registered office is Queensway House, 275-285 High Street, Stratford, London E15 2TF.

You can contact our Data Protection lead by email at: dpo@marywardcentre.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about this notice, or if you would like to exercise your legal rights in relation to your personal data, please contact us using the details above.

How we collect your information

We may collect personal information about you:

- when you contact us for advice or assistance;
- when you provide information to us in person, by telephone, by email, through forms, or by other means;
- when we open or manage a case or advice matter for you;
- when we represent you in court or assist you under the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme;
- when you are referred to us by another organisation, or when we refer you to another organisation;
- from third parties involved in your case, such as courts, tribunals, landlords, creditors, public authorities, advice agencies, law firms, barristers, experts or other representatives;
- from funders, auditors or partner organisations where this is relevant to the services we provide;
- when you provide feedback or make a complaint.

The types of information we collect

Depending on the nature of your matter, we may collect and use the following types of personal information:

- your name and contact details, including address, email address and telephone number;
- information about your legal issue, advice matter, complaint or referral;
- information contained in documents or evidence you provide to us;

- financial information, including information about income, debts, benefits, housing costs or other financial circumstances;
- information about your household, family or other people connected with your matter;
- information needed to assess eligibility for our services or for particular funded services;
- demographic and monitoring information, including information on your health, disability, ethnicity or race, or sexual orientation where this is needed for funder reporting, service monitoring or equality monitoring;
- other special category data where it is provided by you in relation your matter including information about your health, racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life or sexual orientation, or information relating to criminal allegations, proceedings or convictions;
- records of advice given, correspondence, attendance notes and other case file information;
- information about feedback, complaints or concerns raised by you.

How we use your information, our legal basis for using your information and who we share it with

Where we have a contractual relationship with you

We process your personal data because it is necessary to provide legal advice, assistance, representation and related services to you, or to take steps at your request before providing those services.

In this respect, we may use your personal data:

- to assess your eligibility for our services;
- to open, manage and administer your advice matter or case;
- to provide legal advice and representation;
- to communicate with you about your matter;
- to obtain information and evidence relevant to your matter;
- to represent you in court, including through the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service (HLPAS);
- to communicate with third parties involved in your matter; and
- to make or receive referrals where necessary in connection with the services we provide.

In this respect, we may share your information with courts, tribunals, public authorities, referral organisations, external law firms, barristers and other professional advisers, experts and third parties involved in your matter where necessary to provide our services.

Legitimate interests

We may process your personal data because it is necessary for our legitimate interests in operating, monitoring and improving our legal services and protecting the interests of our organisation and the people we assist.

In this respect, we may use your personal data:

- to monitor and improve our services;
- to analyse client needs and demand for our services;
- to obtain feedback about the services we provide;
- to conduct quality assurance and staff training;
- to administer and manage our relationships with funders and service partners;
- to maintain records and carry out conflict checks;
- to deal with enquiries, concerns and complaints; and
- to establish, exercise or defend legal rights and claims.

In this respect, we may share your information with funders, auditors, trustees, insurers, professional advisers and service providers where necessary for these purposes. To deal with complaints, where necessary, we may share your information with members of our Trustee Board, the Legal Ombudsman, our insurers, professional advisers, regulators or other bodies involved in the complaint.

Our legitimate interests include ensuring that our services are delivered effectively, meeting the needs of our clients, obtaining and managing funding, maintaining appropriate records and ensuring the proper administration of the Legal Centre.

Legal obligations

We may process your personal data where necessary to comply with legal, regulatory or professional obligations.

In this respect, we may use your personal data:

- to comply with applicable laws and regulations;
- to meet reporting, monitoring and audit requirements;
- to comply with court orders and requests from regulators or public authorities;
- to maintain records required by law or professional obligations; and
- to safeguard the rights, interests and safety of our clients, staff and organisation.

In this respect, we may share your information with regulators, courts, public authorities, funders, auditors and other bodies where we are required or permitted to do so by law or pursuant to our funding obligations.

Special category and sensitive information

This may include information about your health, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life or sexual orientation, or information relating to criminal allegations, proceedings or convictions.

We will only process this information where we are permitted to do so under data protection law. Where special category data is processed, this may include circumstances where the processing is necessary for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims or where another condition under Article 9 UK GDPR applies, such as for the purposes of monitoring equality of opportunity.

International transfers

If we transfer personal data outside the UK, we will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place where required by data protection law.

How long we keep your information

We will keep your personal information for as long as necessary for the purposes described in this notice.

In general, we keep case, advice, referral and complaint information for 7 years from the date the relevant matter is closed, or from the date you contacted us about the matter where no case is opened. After that period, we may retain limited information where necessary for conflict checks, legal, regulatory or record-keeping purposes.

Your rights

Under UK GDPR, you have rights in relation to your personal data. These include the right to:

- request access to the personal data we hold about you;
- ask us to correct inaccurate or incomplete personal data;
- ask us to erase your personal data in certain circumstances;
- ask us to restrict our processing of your personal data in certain circumstances;
- object to our processing where we rely on legitimate interests;
- receive personal data you have provided to us in a portable format, where this right applies;
- withdraw consent where we rely on consent for a particular processing activity;
- make a complaint to us or the Information Commissioner's Office.

Please note that the above rights are not absolute, and we may be entitled or required to refuse a request where an exemption applies.

How to complain

If you are concerned about how Mary Ward Legal Centre uses your personal data, please contact our Data Protection lead using the contact details above. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.org.uk), although the Information Commissioner's Office recommends that you first try and resolve the complaint with us.