

Welfare Assistance Privacy Notice

UniteWM7015 Welfare Assistance Scheme

Introduction

This Privacy Notice explains how information submitted through the UniteWM7015 Welfare Assistance Scheme is collected, used, stored, and protected.

The Welfare Assistance Scheme provides financial support and assistance to eligible branch members who are experiencing hardship, misfortune, or other exceptional circumstances. To assess applications fairly and responsibly, we must process personal information provided by applicants, together with any supporting evidence submitted as part of an application.

Please read this notice carefully before submitting an application.

Who Is Responsible for Your Information?

The Welfare Assistance Scheme is administered by UniteWM7015 – Sandwell Local Authority Branch.

Data Controller: UniteWM7015 – Sandwell Local Authority Branch

Contact Email: branch@unitewm7015.co.uk

Postal Address: 1st Floor Smethwick Council House, High Street, Smethwick, B66 3NT

If you have any questions about how your information is used, please contact the branch using the details provided above.

What Information We Collect

Depending on the circumstances of your application, we may collect the following types of information:

Personal Information

- Name
- Membership number
- Contact details
- Employment details where relevant to the application

Financial Information

- Income and expenditure information
- Information about debts, arrears or financial hardship
- Details of benefits received
- Information about savings where eligibility criteria require this

Supporting Evidence

Where necessary, we may request supporting documentation, including:

- Benefit assessments
- Debt advice reports
- Evidence of rent, mortgage or household arrears
- Income and expenditure statements
- Other documents relevant to your application

Special Category Information

Applications may include sensitive personal information, such as:

- Trade union membership information
- Health or disability information
- Information relating to bereavement or family circumstances
- Equality monitoring information where voluntarily provided

We only request information that is necessary to assess your application.

Why We Use Your Information

We use your information to:

- Assess eligibility for welfare assistance
 - Verify information provided in your application
 - Make decisions regarding awards or assistance
 - Contact you regarding your application
 - Administer approved payments or support
 - Review applications and appeals
 - Prevent fraud or misuse of branch funds
 - Meet financial governance, audit and accountability requirements
 - Monitor the fairness and effectiveness of the Welfare Assistance Scheme
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Our Lawful Basis for Processing

We process personal information where it is necessary for the legitimate administration of the Welfare Assistance Scheme and for the legitimate activities of a trade union acting in the interests of its members.

Where special category data is processed, we rely on Article 9(2)(d) UK GDPR (legitimate activities of a trade union or not-for-profit body) relating to the legitimate activities of a not-for-profit body with trade union aims and, where applicable, other lawful conditions.

Equality Monitoring Information

Equality monitoring questions are entirely voluntary.

You may:

- Leave questions unanswered;
- Select "Prefer not to say"; or
- Decline to provide any equality information.

Your answers to equality monitoring questions:

- Will not affect eligibility;
 - Will not influence welfare decisions;
 - Are collected only to monitor fairness and equality;
 - May be anonymised or aggregated for reporting and review purposes.
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Who Can Access Your Information?

Access to application information is restricted to authorised individuals who require it for the administration, review, governance, or audit of the scheme.

This may include:

- Welfare officers
- Authorised branch officers
- Review officers involved in appeals or reviews
- Individuals responsible for financial governance or auditing of the scheme

Anyone handling applications is expected to treat information confidentially and use it only for authorised purposes.

Sharing Your Information

We do not sell personal information or share it for marketing purposes.

Information will only be disclosed where this is necessary for the administration of the scheme, compliance with legal obligations, audit requirements, fraud prevention, or where disclosure is required by law.

We may use service providers to host or process information submitted through the branch website. Such providers are required to apply appropriate safeguards to protect personal information.

International Transfers

Where information is processed through third-party website or cloud service providers, personal information may be stored or processed outside the United Kingdom.

Where international transfers take place, appropriate safeguards will be applied in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

How Long We Keep Information

We retain information only for as long as necessary to administer the scheme and meet legal, financial, governance, and audit requirements.

Retention periods may differ depending on:

- Whether an application was successful or unsuccessful;
- Whether a review or appeal was requested;
- Financial record-keeping requirements; and
- Legal and regulatory obligations.

Record	Retention
Unsuccessful application	2 years
Successful application	6 years
Audit records	6 years
Equality monitoring data	Reviewed annually

Protecting Your Information

We take reasonable technical and organisational measures to protect personal information against unauthorised access, disclosure, loss, or misuse.

Measures may include:

- Restricted access controls;
 - Password protection and authentication measures;
 - Secure storage of application records;
 - Confidential handling procedures;
 - Secure deletion and disposal processes.
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Your Rights

Under UK data protection legislation, you may have the right to:

- Access your personal information;
- Request correction of inaccurate information;
- Request restriction of processing;
- Object to certain processing activities;
- Request deletion of information where appropriate;
- Complain about how your information has been handled.

Some rights may be limited where information must be retained for legal, financial, governance, or audit purposes.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with how your information has been handled, please contact the branch in the first instance so that we can seek to resolve the matter.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Important Guidance for Applicants

Please provide only information that is relevant and necessary for your application.

Do not provide:

- Passwords or PINs;
- Full payment card details;
- Unnecessary medical records;
- Unnecessary information about other people.

Where supporting evidence is requested, please provide only documents that are relevant to your application. Information that is not required for the assessment may be redacted where appropriate.

Last reviewed: 10/10/2026

Next review due: 10/10/2027