

Full privacy notice for cost of living research

1. Introduction

The Office for Students ('OfS') is the regulator of the higher education sector in England and has certain statutory functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017. You can find more information about the OfS and the work that we do on our website:

www.officeforstudents.org.uk.

The OfS is committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we hold about you and how we use it. This privacy notice tells you what to expect when the OfS collects personal information as part of the cost of living student survey.

The OfS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our registration number is ZA309955 and you can check our entry details on the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/register-of-fee-payers/>.

2. Data controller and Data Protection Officer

The OfS is the 'data controller' for personal information collected via the cost of living survey. Our location and contact details are below:

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Tel: 0117 931 7317

Email: dp@officeforstudents.org.uk

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) is the first point of contact for people whose information is processed. You can contact the DPO using the details above. You should note that this email address is monitored by other members of the OfS's data protection team. Therefore, please mark any correspondence 'for the attention of the Data Protection Officer'.

Savanta are a data processor working on behalf of the OfS to administer the cost of living survey. Savanta is also the data controller for personal information that they hold for their own purposes (names and contact details of students). Savanta's Data Protection Officer's contact details are below:

Savanta DPO

60 Great Portland Street

London

W1W 7RT

Tel: 020 7632 3434

Email: dpo@savanta.com

3. What personal information we will hold and use

The personal information that will be collected and analysed as part of this processing activity is set out below:

- name
- contact details
- gender
- age
- year of study
- distance of study
- mode of study (undergraduate/postgraduate/part-time/full-time)
- measure of socioeconomic status (e.g. whether a student previously was a recipient of free school meals)
- care leaver status
- subject of study
- type of provider (e.g. Russell Group, pre-92, post-92, specialist)
- nationality (e.g. home/international student).

Special category data

- racial or ethnic origin
- disability (health).

4. Our purpose for using the information

We can only use your personal information where we have a specific purpose or purposes for doing so. We will use your personal data to:

- understand the impacts of the cost of living on different groups of students
- explore the effectiveness of interventions to alleviate the cost of living amongst students.

To achieve the above aims, the specific uses that will be made of your personal information are listed below:

- Savanta will collect and analyse your personal information and provide an aggregated report to the OfS.
- The OfS will use the findings of the report to create an Insight brief regarding the cost of living.
- The OfS will publish anonymised responses on the impact of the cost of living, including student views on the cost of living's impact and the utility of interventions regarding it. The OfS will ensure that no individuals can be identified by the published responses.
- If we want to use your personal information for a reason other than those purposes set out above, we will tell you before we start that use and provide further information about the new purpose(s).

5. Legal basis for using your personal information

Under data protection legislation, we require a legal basis to be able to process your personal information for the purposes set out above. In this case, the legal basis is:

- **Article 6(1)(e) Public task:** the processing is necessary to perform a task in the public interest or for our official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

This processing activity aligns with the general duties of the OfS as set out in section 2 of the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017, notably the need to promote equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in higher education provided by English higher education providers.

Special category data

In order to process special category data, we require an additional legal basis under Article 9 of the UK GDPR. In this case, the relevant condition is:

- **Article 9(2)(j) Archiving, research and statistics (with a basis in law):** the processing is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) and Schedule 1 part (4) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

6. Who we share your personal information with and why

The OfS will not routinely pass your information to any other organisation except where required to do so as part of our functions or by law.

The outputs of the survey may be published by the OfS in an aggregated form, ensuring that no individuals can be identified.

7. How long we hold your personal information

We are only able to retain a copy of your personal information as long as it is still needed for the purpose(s) for which it was collected.

Your personal information will be kept 90 days after the close of the survey. After that point, your personal information will be confidentially and securely disposed of.

If we need to keep your personal information for longer than the retention period above, we will inform you and explain the reasons for this.

8. Where your personal information will be stored

Your personal information will be stored on servers in the European Economic Area (EEA) and will not be transferred outside that territory unless required by a court order.

9. How we protect your personal information

The OfS has a number of security measures in place to protect your personal information, including:

- Accredited to the Cyber Essentials PLUS standard for cybersecurity.
- All staff are required to undertake training in data protection and information security on joining the OfS.
- Formal information security policies that must be read and understood by all staff.
- Personal information is only available to those members of staff who require access as part of their role.
- You can read more information on our approach to information security on our website: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-privacy/information-security/.

Savanta has a number of security measures in place to protect your information, including:

- All employees must undertake mandatory data security training before they are granted access to systems.
- All processing of data about individuals being done in an aggregated, anonymised format.
- All personal and special category data is encrypted in transit and at rest.
- All analysis of personal or special category data is done at the aggregate level rather than in reference to any personal information.
- You can read more information on Savanta's approach to information security on their website: <https://savanta.com/privacy-policy/>.

10. Your rights over your personal information

Once your personal information has been collected, you have certain rights in relation to that personal information that may be exercised. You have the right to request:

- a copy of your personal information
- inaccurate personal information held about you is corrected
- your personal information to be deleted
- processing of your personal information is restricted
- a copy of your information in a format that allows easy transfer ('data portability')
- that you are not subject to automated decision making or profiling (if these take place).

All these rights have certain limitations depending on the request and the purpose for which we are holding your personal information. Further information can be found about these rights and our processes for handling such requests at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/privacy/individual-rights-under-the-general-data-protection-regulation/.

11. Complaints about the use of your personal information

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal information has been handled by the OfS, please contact us via our Data Protection Officer (details in section two) and we will try to resolve your issue informally.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can complain to the data protection supervisory authority. In the UK, this is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and they can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

12. Changes to this notice

We keep our privacy notices under regular review and we will inform you of any changes to this notice by email and by placing the updated privacy notice on our website.

This privacy notice was last updated on 14 December 2022.