

Privacy Policy for SMASO

Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers (SMASO)

Privacy Policy

1. Introduction

The Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers ("SMASO", "the Society", "we", "our" or "us") is committed to protecting the privacy and personal information of its members, prospective members, complainants, correspondents and website users.

We process personal information in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable data protection legislation.

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, store and protect personal information.

2. Who We Are

SMASO is the professional body representing Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers in Scotland and administers membership matters, professional standards and complaints handling procedures.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Administrative Secretary

Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers
Forth House
28 Rutland Square
Edinburgh EH1 2BW

Email: admin@smaso.org.uk

3. The Information We Collect

We may collect and process:

Membership Information

- Name
- Business address
- Contact details
- Professional qualifications
- Appointment details as a Messenger-at-Arms or Sheriff Officer
- Society membership records
- Disciplinary or professional conduct information where relevant

Complaints Information

- Name and contact details of complainants
- Correspondence and evidence submitted
- Details of the officer subject to the complaint
- Records of investigations and outcomes

Website Information

- IP address
 - Browser type
 - Device information
 - Cookie information
 - Website usage statistics
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4. How We Use Personal Information

We use personal information to:

- Administer membership of the Society.
 - Maintain records relating to officers of court.
 - Investigate complaints.
 - Communicate with members.
 - Uphold professional standards.
 - Consider disciplinary referrals where appropriate.
 - Respond to enquiries.
 - Administer events, meetings and professional development activities.
 - Comply with legal and regulatory obligations.
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5. Lawful Bases for Processing

We process personal information under one or more of the following lawful bases:

- Compliance with a legal obligation.
 - Performance of a task carried out in the public interest.
 - Legitimate interests pursued by SMASO.
 - Consent, where required.
 - Establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims.
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6. Complaints Handling

Where a complaint is submitted:

- We will process personal information only for investigating and resolving the complaint.
- We will respect requests for confidentiality where reasonably practicable.
- Complaint correspondence will not be shared beyond those involved in the investigation except where necessary for proper consideration of the complaint or where required by law.

If serious professional conduct issues are identified, relevant information may be disclosed to the appropriate judicial authority or regulatory body in accordance with applicable legislation and procedures.

7. Confidentiality

SMASO recognises that Officers of Court are required to treat information obtained during the course of their duties as confidential. The Society applies the same principle to information received in connection with membership administration, investigations and complaints handling.

Personal information is only disclosed:

- When required by law.
 - With the individual's consent.
 - To professional advisers.
 - To courts or judicial authorities.
 - Where necessary for the proper discharge of the Society's functions.
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8. Sharing Personal Information

We do not sell personal information.

Information may be shared with:

- Sheriff Principals.
- The Lord President.
- Courts and tribunals.
- Legal advisers.
- Insurers.
- IT and administrative service providers acting on our behalf.

Any third-party provider is required to maintain appropriate confidentiality and security standards.

9. Retention of Information

We retain personal information only for as long as necessary.

Typical retention periods are:

Record Type	Retention Period
Membership records	Duration of membership plus 6 years
Complaints records	6 years after closure
Investigation records	6 years after conclusion
Financial records	6 years
Website analytics	As required for operational purposes

Where litigation, disciplinary proceedings or legal obligations require it, information may be retained longer.

10. Security

SMASO takes appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal information against:

- Unauthorised access.
- Unlawful processing.
- Accidental loss.
- Damage or destruction.

Access to personal information is restricted to those who require it for legitimate Society business.

11. Your Rights

Individuals may have the right to:

- Be informed about processing.
 - Access their personal information.
 - Request correction of inaccurate information.
 - Request deletion of information in certain circumstances.
 - Restrict processing.
 - Object to processing.
 - Request portability of data where applicable.
 - Lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
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12. Website and Cookies

The Society's website may use cookies and similar technologies to:

- Improve functionality.
- Maintain security.
- Analyse website traffic.
- Improve user experience.

Users can control cookie settings through their browser preferences.

13. International Transfers

SMASO does not routinely transfer personal information outside the United Kingdom. Where such transfers become necessary, appropriate safeguards will be implemented.

14. Changes to this Policy

This Privacy Policy may be updated from time to time to reflect legal, regulatory or operational changes. The most current version will be published on the Society's website.

15. Contact Us

For questions regarding this Privacy Policy or the processing of personal information, please contact:

Administrative Secretary

Society of Messengers-at-Arms and Sheriff Officers

Forth House

28 Rutland Square

Edinburgh EH1 2BW

Email: admin@smaso.org.uk