Handling guest booking information responsibly

Collect the information needed to provide the booking, keep access appropriate and follow the venue's retention and incident procedures.

Practical staff guidance; adapt the suggested workflow to your venue and current procedures.

Connect each field to a purpose

Review the fields used by the booking team. A contact method may be needed to confirm the visit; a long free-text description of a guest's personal circumstances may add unnecessary detail. ICO guidance describes data minimisation as keeping personal information adequate, relevant and limited to what is needed. Apply that principle when designing the booking form.

Write useful operational notes

Record the arrangement the team needs to provide, using respectful factual wording. Where a request involves health or other sensitive information, use the business's approved approach and escalation route. Staff should understand which system is authorised and who needs access. Avoid spreading the same personal details across private phones and informal copies.

Keep the handover controlled

Give the relevant shift team the operational information they need through the normal booking process. Check recipients before sending confirmations or updates. Store paper records securely and follow the organisation's retention schedule. Decisions about lawful basis, sensitive-data conditions and retention periods belong in the business's documented arrangements.

Know the incident route

If information is sent to the wrong person or becomes exposed, inform the designated contact promptly. Record what happened, which information was involved and what action has already been taken. The responsible team can assess containment, notification and follow-up. A short staff briefing should make that contact route easy to find.

Worked example

Fictional example: the booking team records "step-free arrival route confirmed; duty manager to meet guest" where that is the information needed for the arrangement. They keep any additional sensitive information within the approved process and share the operational instruction with the relevant colleague.

Your next steps

- Identify the purpose of each field.
- Use the approved booking system.
- Write concise operational notes.
- Check recipients and access.
- Escalate incidents promptly.

Map the booking information journey

List where a booking request is received, recorded, shared and eventually removed. Identify which fields the team needs to provide the service. A guest's name and contact details may be useful; unrelated personal details can create unnecessary exposure. Explain approved systems and access. Check whether a temporary printed list, shared mailbox or messaging thread creates another copy that needs handling under the retention arrangements.

A practical correction exercise

Fictional example: an arrival sheet is sent to the wrong internal group. The employee reports the mistake promptly, identifies what was shared and who received it, and follows the business response. The responsible person determines containment and any further duties. Staff should avoid deleting evidence or issuing assurances before the incident is understood. Review why the wrong group was selected and whether a safer workflow is available.

Can a new spreadsheet solve every booking problem?

Only if it is an approved, appropriate system with the necessary access and retention arrangements. Uncontrolled extra copies make correction, security and deletion harder. Check the process before creating another record.

A caller asks whether a named guest has checked in

The caller knows the booking dates and says they are arranging a surprise. They ask reception to confirm the guest is staying tonight. What can reception do?

Compare your decision

Follow the venue's verification and disclosure procedure. Avoid confirming a stay or room details to an unverified caller. Offer an approved alternative, such as taking a message where policy permits. Refer urgent welfare concerns through the appropriate internal route.

Rehearse a helpful answer that reveals nothing about occupancy. Someone knowing a date or surname does not prove their authority to receive booking information.

Sources and editorial basis

- ICO — Data minimisation

Guidance checked on 19 October 2026. Examples and worksheets are original suggested workflows; adapt them to your operation.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details