

Privacy policy

Northcue Ltd

Last updated: 9 August 2026

The short version

Northcue turns confusing official letters into six calm cue cards.

Your document is deleted as soon as we have read the text from it, normally within seconds. The text itself is held in memory only, for a short time, and is never written to our database.

We keep a short record of each session so we can tell whether the product is working. It is not linked to your name, and it contains no part of your letter. We delete it after 30 days.

If you send us feedback, we keep what you wrote for six months.

We do not sell anything, we show no advertising, and we ask you to create no account.

The rest of this page explains all of that properly.

Who we are

Northcue Ltd is the data controller for the information described here.

Company	Northcue Ltd
Registered in	England and Wales
Company number	17336181
ICO registration reference	ZC201690
Contact	hello@northcue.uk
Service	northcue.co.uk

Registered office: Flat 1302, 1 Wellers Way, Wembley, HA9 0UQ

What happens to your document

This is the part most people want to know, so it comes first.

When you upload a file, it is sent to our server and written to a temporary location so the text can be read out of it.

As soon as the text has been read, the file is deleted. This happens whether the reading succeeded or failed, and it happens within seconds in normal use. It is not left waiting for a scheduled cleanup.

The text that was read is held in our server's memory only. It is never written to our database. It is deleted when your cards are finished, and in any case within 15 minutes.

If you paste text instead of uploading a file, the same applies to the text you pasted.

We never store your document, the text of your document, or the words on your cue cards. Nothing you can read on a cue card is written to our database.

A small technical record of the job is written to a temporary file on our server so that your cards can be delivered to your browser. That record contains counts, timings and status codes only. It contains no part of your letter and no part of your cards. It is removed automatically.

What we do keep, and why

A record of the session

Each time a document is processed, we write one row to our database. It contains things like: which language you were reading in, what type of document it appeared to be, how long the processing took, the file size and type, whether the reading was clear or poor, and which safety checks were applied.

It contains no part of your letter.

Why: so we can tell whether Northcue is working, find faults, and understand which languages and document types people actually use.

How long: 30 days, then it is deleted automatically.

Records of what you tapped

We record simple events such as which page you were on and which card you reached. These carry no personal information.

Why: to understand where people get stuck.

How long: 30 days, then deleted automatically.

Feedback, if you send it

If you use the feedback form, we keep your rating, the options you selected, anything you typed in the comment box, and your email address if you chose to give one so that we could reply.

Why: feedback is how a very small product improves. A person reads it.

How long: six months, then deleted automatically. If you asked us to reply, we delete your email address once we have replied to you.

Please leave names, addresses and account numbers out of the comment box. We automatically remove things that look like email addresses, card numbers, phone numbers, postcodes, National Insurance numbers, sort codes and long number sequences. We cannot reliably remove a name or an address written in ordinary prose, so please do not include them.

Cookies and things kept on your device

The one cookie we set

Name	<code>clearsteps_anon_session</code>
What it holds	A random identifier. It is not your name and it is not linked to your name.
Purpose	It joins the records above together, so that a session and the events within it can be understood as one visit rather than as unrelated fragments.
Lifetime	30 days
Set when	Only when you use the product. Simply landing on the site and leaving again sets no cookie.
Protections	It is never sent to any other company, and it is set with the standard protections against being read from another site.

This cookie is not required for you to read the site. If you clear it, or block it, Northcue still works.

Settings kept in your browser

These stay on your device and are never sent to us:

- your chosen language
- your theme, text size and background choices
- whether you have dismissed the prompt to add Northcue to your home screen

You can clear these at any time through your browser settings.

What we do not use

We use no advertising cookies, no tracking pixels, no third party analytics service, and no social media trackers. Nothing on our pages is loaded from another company's servers.

Who else is involved

To run Northcue we rely on four other companies. Each of them is a processor acting on our instructions.

OpenAI

What reaches them: two things, and we want to be precise about both.

First, the text of your document, after we have automatically removed things that look like email addresses, National Insurance numbers, card numbers, phone numbers and long number sequences.

Second, the details our own system has already worked out from your letter: who it appears to be from, any amount, any dates, any reference numbers. These are sent as they appear, without that removal applied, because they are the details your cue cards have to state. If you are reading in a language other than English, they are sent a second time to be translated, with an instruction to keep names and numbers exactly as written.

So please assume that the key details of your letter, including names, amounts and reference numbers, reach OpenAI. This happens on every document, not in rare cases. We would rather say that plainly than let a description of our masking imply more protection than it gives.

Why: our own system decides what your cue cards say and how careful to be. OpenAI is used only to phrase those cards in clear, natural language. It never makes a safety decision.

What we ask them to do: we tell OpenAI, on every request, not to retain what we send as stored data.

What we cannot promise: OpenAI keeps its own logs for abuse monitoring for up to 30 days, on all traffic, regardless of what we ask. We do not currently hold the arrangement with OpenAI that removes this. We are being direct about it because a policy that quietly implied otherwise would be worse than one that says so.

Training: OpenAI states that data sent through its API is not used to train its models unless a customer opts in. We have not opted in.

Where: OpenAI is based in the United States, so this involves a transfer outside the UK. It takes place under the standard contractual protections in OpenAI's data processing terms.

Supabase

Our database, hosted in Stockholm. It holds the records described above and nothing else.

Access is locked at the database level. The database rejects all access by default, and only our server, holding a key that is never present in your browser, can read or write anything.

Render

Our hosting provider. Our server runs on their infrastructure in Frankfurt, so everything passes through it.

Cloudflare

Sits in front of the site, encrypts the connection between your browser and us, and protects against attacks.

Where your information goes

Northcue is a UK service, and the parts of it we control run inside Europe.

Our database is hosted in Stockholm, Sweden.

Our server runs in Frankfurt, Germany.

Both are in the European Economic Area, which the UK recognises as offering equivalent protection, so no additional safeguards are needed for those transfers.

The transfer to OpenAI, described above, involves the United States. It takes place under the standard contractual protections in OpenAI's data processing terms.

Rate limits and IP addresses

To stop the service being abused, we limit how many requests can come from one internet connection in a short window. This means your IP address is briefly held in our server's memory, for around a minute, and then discarded.

Your IP address is not written to our database and does not appear in our records.

How long we keep everything

What	How long
Your uploaded file	Deleted as soon as the text is read from it, normally within seconds
The text read from your document	In memory only, deleted when your cards are done and in any case within 15 minutes
The words on your cue cards	Never stored
Session records	30 days
Event records	30 days
Feedback, including anything you typed	Six months
Your email address, if you gave one for a reply	Deleted once we have replied
The session cookie on your device	30 days

The deletions above happen automatically, every day, without anyone needing to remember.

Deleted records are not held in backups. When a record is deleted it is gone, and nothing survives quietly behind these periods.

Your rights

Under UK data protection law you have the right to ask us for a copy of information we hold about you, to have it corrected, to have it deleted, to restrict or object to how we use it, and to receive it in a portable form. You can also complain to the regulator.

We have to be honest with you about what this means in practice here.

Northcue has no accounts and asks for no name, so in most cases we genuinely cannot tell which records came from you. There is nothing linking our records to you as a person. For most visitors, this means we hold nothing that could be identified as theirs, and so there is nothing for us to retrieve, correct or delete.

There are two situations where we may be able to act:

If you left an email address in the feedback form, we can find, correct or delete that feedback. Email us from the same address.

If you can supply the identifier from the cookie on your device, we can look for records carrying it. Recovering it is a technical step and we do not expect most people to want to do this. Email us and we will explain how.

In either case we will respond within one month.

If you are unhappy with how we have handled your information, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at ico.org.uk or on 0303 123 1113. We would rather you told us first, but you do not have to.

Why we are allowed to do this

We rely on **legitimate interests** for processing your document into cue cards, for keeping session and event records, and for handling feedback. Our interest is in running and improving a free tool that helps people understand official letters. We have weighed this against your privacy by not storing your document, not storing its text, not asking who you are, and deleting what little we keep on a short timetable.

For the cookie described above, we rely on your use of the product. You can clear or block it and Northcue still works.

You can object to any of this at any time by emailing us.

Sensitive documents

Some letters carry sensitive information. A hospital appointment, a benefits decision, a debt letter.

Northcue does not detect or separate these. It treats every document the same way: read it, make the cards, delete it. Nothing from a sensitive letter is stored by us.

But please read the section about OpenAI above before you upload something you would not want a third party to process, even briefly. If you would rather not, Northcue also accepts text you have typed or edited yourself, so you can remove anything you want to leave out first.

Children

Northcue is built for adults. It is not aimed at children and we do not knowingly collect information from them.

We ask for no name or age, so we cannot tell how old a visitor is. If you are a parent or carer and you are concerned, email us.

Automated decision making

Northcue reads your document automatically and decides what to put on each cue card, including how serious the letter appears to be and whether to decline to read it at all.

These are reading decisions, not decisions about you. They produce a set of cards. They have no legal effect on you, they do not affect your rights, entitlements or money, and nothing is passed on to anyone else.

Northcue is a reading aid. It is not legal, financial, medical or official advice, and you should always check your original document.

Security

- All traffic is encrypted in transit.
- Our database refuses all access by default. Only our server can reach it.
- Keys and secrets are held only on the server and never appear in your browser.
- We limit how many requests one connection can make.
- We limit what can be uploaded: five file types, up to 15 MB, PDFs up to five pages.
- Our server logs record error codes and status codes only. They contain no part of your document, no part of your cards, and no identifiers.

No system is perfect, and we will not pretend otherwise. If you find a security problem, please email us and we will take it seriously.

Changes to this policy

If we change how we handle your information, we will update this page and change the date at the top.

If a change is significant, we will say so on the page rather than hope you notice.

Getting in touch

hello@northcue.uk

We are a very small company. We read everything and we reply.

If you would prefer to complain to the regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office can be reached at ico.org.uk or 0303 123 1113.