

Looked After Children & Young People - Your Social Care File

Why do we keep records about you?

- Your social worker needs to keep a record of your health, education, family members, foster placements etc. so that in future they can look back and see what has happened to you and have a record of your time in care.
- If there is a change of social worker, your new social worker can look on your file and find out about you.
- The social worker also keeps notes of visits with you and of meetings about you.
- We also collect information about how we work with you so we can see where we need to improve.

Can you see your file?

- Yes, the law says you have a right to see personal information held about you by the Children and Learning Department unless we think it would be emotionally harmful to you.
- If we decide you cannot see it then your social worker will explain why to you.
- When you are 18, you will be able to see all of the records kept on you, and your social worker will talk to you about what support you will need to read and understand the papers.

How can you get to see your file?

- We want to work openly with you and so you can ask your social worker if you would like to see notes of any meeting your social worker has with you. You should also be given notes of your reviews.
- If you would like to see more of your file, you can write a note to your social worker saying you are requesting access to your records under the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Alternatively, you can fill in our online form, on the left, or write to our Information Management Officer.
- If you need help to do this you could ask your carer to help you or you could contact [National Youth Advocacy Service](#) (NYAS) to ask for help (0800 616101 or email help@nyas.net).
- The file should be given to you within 40 days although it can sometimes take a longer time to organise this.
- If this is the case, we will explain this to you.
- If people other than your social worker or people who work for Southend Council have written things about you then we have to ask their permission to show these documents to you.
- If they say no, then we will tell you and explain to you what you can do if you want to complain about this.
- If there is information on your file about other people, for example about your parents or other members of your family then we must ask them for their permission to tell you. We will ask you if you want us to do this.

Who else can see your file?

- Your file is confidential and will not be shown to anybody outside the Department for People.
- Other people who believe there may be information about them in your file may ask to see anything on the file that relates specifically to them.
- If your parents ask to see your file, if you are old enough we will ask you whether you agree to this and we will take your views into account. We may allow them to see parts of your file if we believe it is in your best interests. If there is information on your file which is just about them then the law says they are allowed to see it

Can you see your file after you have left care?

- Yes. The Department for People have to keep records of all children who have been in their care.
- The law tells us how long we have to keep our records about you and if you have been looked after by us we have to keep our records about you until you are 75 years old!
- You have the right to see your records even if you are no longer under a Care Order or if you are no longer receiving a service from the 16+ team.