

INFORMATION ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF SOCIAL CARE CLIENTS

How do you use my information?

If you contact the Community or Children & Young People's Directorates, we will normally keep a record of that contact and any work we do with you.

We must record important details like the names and addresses of family, schools and doctors. This helps us to provide the service you need when you need it. Then we know where to go and who to contact when we are doing something on your behalf.

We need a record of the work we have done with you so that if the worker who knows you is not available, someone else can continue to offer the same service and approach.

How do you use my information?

Somerset Social Care Services collects information for different purposes including:

- To arrange and provide care
- Child Protection
- Employment and training purposes
- Fostering and adoption
- Investigate complaints
- Managing, planning and developing services
- Provide services for children in need
- Provide services for children looked after
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Audit and research
- Single assessment process

We will tell you how we intend to use your information and who we may need to share it with to arrange services on your behalf.

"Better Care, Higher Standards" is our Charter, which tells you what you can expect from our services, and helps you know what you are entitled to. Although it is written particularly for people who use services for adults, much of it also applies to our services for children, young people and families.

Seeing our records about you

You have a right to see what is in our records about you. This allows you to make sure it is accurate, and to reassure yourself that we are not doing things which have not been discussed with you. If you no longer receive services from us you may still be able to view your record as case files are kept for a minimum of 12 months after being closed.

Fill in a simple form (SS730) available from one of our offices, day centres, homes or the Internet. The Information Sheet "Accessing your records" provides further information about the process.

How do you keep my records confidential?

Your record may be made up of a number of paper and computer files depending on the type of services you receive. Your information will be stored securely so that nobody has access to it that shouldn't.

Everybody who works for Somerset Social Care Services, and the organisations that work with us, have a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. You have the right to ask us, at any time, not to share your information with other organisations but if you do this it may affect the service you receive.

We only pass on information about you to people who have a genuine need for it. Statistics that we compile for central government exclude details that identify you, wherever possible.

We will give information to your relatives, friends and carers if you wish us to do so.

In very serious circumstances we may need to share information about you without your consent. Examples of this are for a police investigation, a court case or if someone is at risk of harm.

Information you give us for one purpose will not be used for another, without your permission.

When our work with you has ended, we will keep your record for a minimum of 12 months, depending on the type of service you have received. After this time your record will be destroyed.

How can I make a complaint?

We try to be as helpful as possible, but you need to know what to do if you are not satisfied with the service we provide. If you feel you have reason to complain we will:

- Investigate the matter quickly and fairly
- Tell you of the outcome
- Try to put right any mistakes or injustice

If you are unhappy about the service you are receiving, and the member of staff you are in contact with isn't able to put things right, you need to speak to the local Manager for that service. Contact your local Social Care Services office and ask to be put in touch with the Manager concerned (who may not be based at the same office).

If you are still unhappy, you can make a formal complaint. The Information Sheet "Complaint about Social Care Services for Adults" provides further information.

Suggestions and compliments

We need to know what we are getting right and what needs improvement, so that we can offer the best possible service. You, the customer, are in the best position to tell us.

Further information

To make a suggestion or compliment, get help to make a complaint or to request a copy of the Charter or any of the leaflets contact either:

Signposts (Information Service)

Freephone: 0800 317220

Open: 8am – 6pm weekdays
9am – 4pm Saturdays

County Hall

Policy Development Manager
Children and Young People's Directorate
Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton TA1 4DY

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES LOCAL OFFICES

Somerset Coast Area

Blake
Northgate
Bridgwater TA6 3EU

Phone: 01278 431111

Taunton Area

Social Services Office
County Hall
Taunton TA1 4DY

Phone : 01823 335285

South Somerset Area

Holyrood Lace Mill
Holyrood Street
Chard TA20 2YA

Phone: 01935 422111

Maltravers House
Petters Way
Yeovil BA20 1SP

Phone: 01935 422111

Mendip Area

Public Offices
Christchurch Street West
Frome BA11 1EF

Phone: 01373 461162

2 Orchard Court
The Archers Way
Glastonbury BA6 9LH

Phone: 01458 831668

Headquarters

Somerset County Council
County Hall
Taunton TA1 4DY

Phone: 0845 345 9122

Fostering recruitment team:
01823 357674