

Looking after your personal information

This leaflet explains what information we need in order to provide services to you. It describes how we use this information and your rights about how it is held and shared.



Personal

Your records

Anyone receiving a service from Kent County Council will have a record kept about them. These personal records may be stored either in paper files or on computer or both. It is necessary to keep information such as names, addresses, telephone numbers and services that are provided so that we can plan and review services with you on a regular basis. We may also ask for your 'ethnic origin' as this information helps us to monitor how accessible our services are to all communities. Our aim is to share our work with you as fully as possible and your views and wishes, or those of the people you have asked to act on your behalf, will be part of your personal record.

Making sure your personal record is accurate

Staff and others working with you will always try to make sure that the information they record is accurate. Any information you do not understand will be explained and discussed with you. However mistakes can occur or your circumstances may change.

If you consider information recorded about you to be inaccurate you can ask for it to be corrected. In most circumstances we will do this, but sometimes we will need to leave the information unchanged.

In these cases we will always note that you disagree with what is written.

Confidentiality

We ask you to provide us with information about yourself so that we can ensure you receive appropriate support and services. We recognise that

the information you provide may be sensitive and we will respect your privacy. We have a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. This means we store it securely and control access to it's outcomes which will act as a beacon, guiding the work of our commissioners, partners and services in a time of increasing complexity and financial challenge.

Sharing information

The sharing of your information is controlled strictly by law. We are not permitted to disclose your information to other people unless it is the only way we can make sure you and those close to you stay safe and healthy, or if we are legally required to do so. To help provide you with appropriate support, staff in our organisation may work with people from another organisation to jointly deliver services to you. So that this works smoothly we may need to share some of your information with each other.

Information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Anyone who receives information from us has the same legal duty to keep it confidential.

You will be asked to consent to sharing information with other people to help with your care. If you do not give consent your wishes will be respected wherever possible, although this may limit the effectiveness of the services that can be offered to you, and information could still be shared in an emergency or when we are legally bound to.

Access to your records

You have a right to see your records. If you only wish to see the information that is held by your Social Worker or Care Manager or other professional about the services you are currently receiving, please contact them to discuss this. If you wish to see the records that relate to a number of services you have received from different parts of the Council, you will need to make a 'formal' application under the Data Protection Act.

To do this please contact the KCC Information Resilience & Transparency Team at the address shown below. You will be asked to complete a form and to pay a fee of £10. If there is a lot of information held about you, you could be asked to wait up to 40 days for the records to be located and prepared for you.

If someone else, such as a relative or a solicitor is requesting access on your behalf, they will need to show us your written consent.

You can request copies of documents and these will be sent to you, unless you prefer to collect them.

When your records are ready for you to receive them, you may wish to visit us to go through them with a member of staff who will help explain them to you. You will need to make an appointment to do this and you may bring a carer, relative, friend or interpreter with you.

In exceptional circumstances we may not be allowed to disclose some of the information to you and access may not be possible. This may include information on your file that is from or about other people if they have not given their permission for this to be released to you. If information is withheld from you, an explanation of the reason for this will be given to you.

A child or a young person has a right to access their files depending on their age and understanding but a parent does not have an automatic right to see their child's record.

Retention of records

We keep personal records for some time after we have stopped delivering services to you. This is so that we can restart a service to you later if necessary. However, records are safely destroyed after an appropriate period of time. In special circumstances we retain records for a much longer period, for example when a child has been adopted.

If you wish to know how long we keep your records for, please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team.

Further information

If you only wish to see the information that is held by your Social Worker or Case Manager or other professional about the services you are currently receiving, please contact them to discuss this.

Or alternatively, please call the Contact Centre on: **03000 414141** (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

If you wish to make a 'formal' application for access to your records, please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team in any of the following ways :

By e-mail: dataprotection@kent.gov.uk

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/contact_us/access_to_information/data_protection.aspx

By post:

KCC Information Resilience & Transparency Team

Kent County Council

Room SH 2.71

Sessions House

County Hall

Maidstone ME14 1XQ

By fax: **03000 420303**

If you are unhappy about the way we keep your information, or the way in which your request to look at your records has been dealt with, please contact the person who handled your request to discuss this, or contact the Information Resilience & Transparency Team as above. You can also ask for a copy of the leaflet which explains our complaints procedures. If you are still unhappy, you can contact the Office of the Information Commissioner at :

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Tel: **0303 123 1113** (local rate) or **01625 545 745** if you prefer to use a national rate number.

Web: www.ico.org.uk or email: casework@ico.org.uk

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If you would like to request further copies of this publication or enquire about our range of leaflets please contact us via:

Tel: **03000 414141**

Textphone: **18001 03000 414141**

Our leaflets are also available in other languages, in large print, in braille, and on tape.