

YOUR ACCESS TO YOUR RECORDS

Information held about you and how to see your records

- **What's in your records**

When you first contact Peterborough City Council, we often have to ask you for the basic details, including your name, address and date of birth. You may also need to tell us about your personal or family matters. Sometimes people who know you- such as your doctor or teacher-may give us information too. Your records contain this information and they are held securely. Records are available only to staff who need to use them.

- **Why Peterborough City Council keeps your records.**

We advise and support thousands of people in Peterborough (adults and children), some over long periods of time. By keeping a record of each person's details and needs, we have the important and up-to-date information we need to plan, provide and review that person's services.

Our staff will normally tell you what information is kept about you. As we work with you we can look back at your records, add to them and use them with you to help decide on the services you need.

- ❖ *You can see some of the information on your file without having to write to anybody- just ask. You and one of our staff may well have filled some of the information in together.*

Information you cannot see

As we treat all the information given to us in confidence, you might not be able to see certain things- such as correspondence about you from people who haven't given their permission for it to be shared with you. Very rarely there may be some information on your records that Peterborough city council will not allow you to have access to. The Data Protection Act (1998) and other guidance advise us when this should happen.

If Peterborough city Council does not allow you to see all the information that it holds about you it will tell you. It will also inform you that you can do about this decision.

Seeing other people's records

Normally, other people-including members of your family-cannot see your records without your written consent. In the same way, you cannot see information about other members of your family unless they give written consent. You may, however see information about yourself if it is held on another person's file.

Parents may see their children's records if the child is able and willing to give consent. If a child or young person is not able to give consent, the county council has to consider whether to refuse or limit access to the required information. Again the Data Protection Act (1998) and other guidance set down the circumstances where the county council can refuse a parent access to their child's records and where other individuals can see information held on your records.

What to do if you want to see your records

You, or someone who has permission to represent you, should make a written request to the county council or complete a 'Seeing Your Files' leaflet.

- ❖ *There is no age limit. Children and young people under 18 have the right to see their records as long as they understand what they are doing in making this request (discussions with the young person and their social worker should take place.)*

We will send you a leaflet and explain what the next steps are within five days of receiving your request. When we have received your completed form with proof of your identity, we register your request and start the process of accessing your records. The standard documents for proof are copies of your passport or driving license, we also need to see proof of a current home address, i.e. a utility bill. When you receive your records we ask you to sign and date a form to say you have received them.

- ❖ *It may take some time to collect the information you ask for. Your records may be held at different offices. If information supplied by other people is on your records, we need to ask them to agree that it be shown to you, all 3rd party information on your file that is not agreed by the other person will be redacted..*
- ❖ *Please give us as much information as you can about the records you want to see; Perhaps it is about a certain period of time or a particular service you have received.*
- ❖ *The Data Protection Act (1998) states that you should be given the information that relates to you within 40 days of the council receiving your completed form and proof of your identity and address (proof of your address could be a copy of a utility bill, a bank statement or a benefits book)*

- ❖ *If it is not possible to trace all the information within 40 days we will inform you. We will let you know when the information will be available as soon as we can. If we have many files held on you we can let you have a few at a time.*
- ❖ *Please tell us if you need an interpreter or other special facilities, so we can make the necessary arrangements.*
- ❖ *The County Council keeps records for varying periods of time, depending on the services provided.*
- ❖ *We will make every attempt to trace any records concerning you. If your records are no longer available we will write or call you to let you know.*
- ❖ *Where a request for information relates to a deceased person, this is considered under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). A request should be made in writing, identifying the name of the deceased person and the information requires.*

If you are not satisfied

If you have a complaint about the accuracy of the information shown to you, or if you think that part of the record is being unnecessarily withheld, you can ask the person showing you the records to explain the reasons for this, if you are still unhappy with the decision you can make a formal complaint and you have the right of appeal to the courts or to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
(Previously known as the Data protection Commissioner)

Contact Peterborough City Council

For a 'Seeing Your Files Form'.

Access to Records Coordinator
Children's Social Care.
Quality Assurance Team
Floor 1
Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough PE1 1AY