

Protecting your information

How we protect the information that we hold on you



A leaflet for service users, their families and carers

This leaflet explains:

- access by Surrey County Council (SCC) employees to your personal information
- the duty of confidentiality
- electronic and paper records
- Surrey County Council's Data Handling Guarantee.

What information is held about you and/or your family

If you have had contact with Adult or Children's Services, it is likely that we hold information about you. This may be because you have used our services, or because you have been involved in the care of a service user as part of their family and/or as a carer.

The information held may include:

- basic personal information, such as address, date of birth, ethnicity
- date and details of referral
- relevant background information
- assessments, reports and care plans
- notes regarding any contact between you and the service
- records of decisions made about the support and services you need
- relevant information from anyone who cares for or knows you, for example a health professional or a relative.

Access to your and/or your family's personal information by Surrey County Council staff

Professionals involved in your and/or your family's care need to be able to frequently access and add to the records we have on you. This enables us to have a detailed and usable record that can be used to deliver the best possible service for your needs.

Professionals who are not regularly involved in your and/or your family's care may also need to access these records. For example, the Emergency Duty Team may need to see these records if there is a crisis out-of-hours, when the professionals you usually have contact with are unavailable. SCC needs to ensure that appropriate staff can access your records quickly and easily as soon as they are needed.



Duty of confidentiality

Surrey County Council staff have a legal obligation of confidentiality. All information held on you and/or your family is considered to be confidential. Professionals are under a strict obligation to only access this information if it is necessary to do so as a legitimate part of their work. They are subject to disciplinary proceedings if they breach their duty of confidentiality. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the confidentiality of the information we hold on you.

Electronic (computer) records

It is a government requirement for Local Authorities to hold social care records in an electronic format. If Surrey County Council holds a social care record for you and/or your family, at least part of it will be held electronically, i.e. on a computer. Surrey County Council is progressively moving towards a situation where all records on its social care service users can be held electronically.

Access to the electronic service user databases that Surrey County Council uses to hold your and/or your family's personal information is restricted. Only staff with a need to access the social care records of service users are granted access to the specific database(s) that are relevant for their work. There are further restrictions in place within these databases dependent on the job function of the staff who have access.

Paper records

Part of your and/or your family's record may also be held in a paper case file. Whilst we are providing you services, these files are held by the individual team with whom you have had contact. Once our contact with you has finished, these paper files will be sent to a secure archive facility.

How long your records are kept

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, we are legally obliged to only keep personal information for as long as is necessary. This period of time will depend on the reason for our contact with you. Sometimes this is for a period of time that is prescribed by law; other times this is for a period of time that is generally held to be best practice. Please ask the professional or team with whom you have contact if you would like to know how long our records on you will be kept before they are destroyed.



Surrey County Council's Data Handling Guarantee

When we ask you for personal information, we promise:

- to make sure you know why we need it
- to only ask for what we need, and not to collect too much or irrelevant information
- to protect it and make sure it is only accessed by relevant people
- to only share it with other organisations when the law allows, or when we have your consent to do so
- to make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary; and
- not to make your personal information available for commercial use without your permission.

In return, we ask you to:

- give us accurate information; and
- tell us as soon as possible if there are any changes to your personal details, such as a new address.

This will help us to keep your information reliable and up to date.

In this and the related leaflets listed overleaf, find out about:

- how to find out what information we hold about you and how to ask us to correct any mistakes
- agreements we have with other organisations for sharing information
- circumstances where we can pass on your personal information without telling you, for example, to prevent and detect crime or to produce anonymised statistics
- our instructions to staff on how to collect, use and delete your personal information
- how we check the information we hold is accurate and up to date; and how to make a complaint.

Any questions or complaints?

If you have any questions regarding the sharing of your personal data, please contact the Data Protection Officer at Surrey County Council, Legal Services, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2DN. If you would like to complain about the way your information has been processed, please contact the professional or team involved in supporting you.

Independent advice about Data Protection

If you would like independent advice about Data Protection, please contact the Information Commissioner at:

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Phone: 01625 545745

Fax: 01625 524510

Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.ico.gov.uk



If you would like this document in large print, on tape or in another language please contact us on:

Tel: 08456 009 009

Fax: 020 8541 9004, Minicom: 020 8541 8914

email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk

Your Information Leaflets

If you would like to see any information held about you and/or your family or to be given information on how your information is shared, please speak or write to the professional or team with whom you have had contact.

Further information can be found in the Accessing Your Information and Sharing Your Information leaflets. Copies of these can be obtained from the team you have contact with or from the **Contact Centre on 08456 009 009**.

Please note that these leaflets are for general information only and are not a full explanation of the law.

Sharing Your Information

Explains the many benefits to sharing information between agencies (e.g. the NHS, housing services, schools) and the principles governing when and why your information may be shared.

Accessing Your Information

Explains what information Surrey County Council holds about you and why; how you can see the information we hold and where we got it from; how you can deal with information that is inaccurate; and how to prevent processing that may cause damage and distress.



Surrey
Safeguarding Adults Board