



Process for Care Leavers asking to “see their files”

As a care leaver, you have the right to ask to see the personal information that has been recorded while you have been in care and since leaving care. When you ask for this information, this is called making a 'Subject Access Request'.

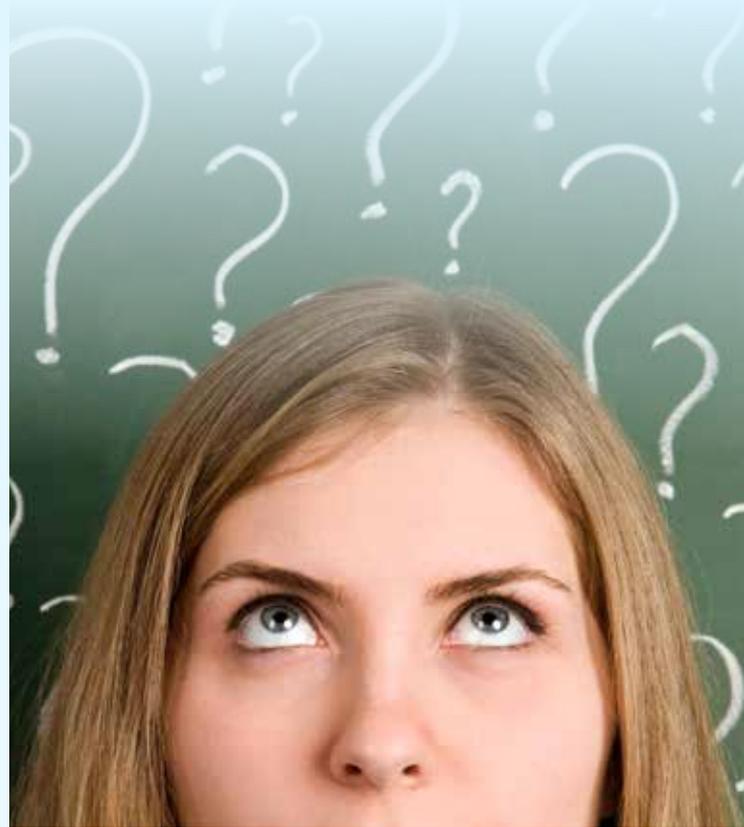
How do you make a Subject Access Request (SAR)?

The best thing to do is to talk to your Personal Adviser (PA) in the Leaving Care Team first, or speak to the Duty Worker if you no longer have a PA. You can ring the Leaving Care Team or 0161 475 6700 or email leavingcareduty@stockport.gov.uk. They will talk you through the process and also check out with you where you are up to - it is important that you are in a settled situation as it can be emotionally quite traumatic.

You can also make your request written or verbally directly to the Information Governance Team at dpa.officer@stockport.gov.uk or 0161 474 4299. Alternatively, you can visit the Stockport Council website which allows you to fill in the Subject Access Request Form - www.stockport.gov.uk/your-rights-data-protection/access-to-your-personal-information

The Information Governance (Information Governance) team will get in touch with the Leaving Care Team to confirm your ID and we will then contact you to discuss your situation and any support needs.

Your request will need to state clearly what information you are seeking for example, “I would like see the records held by social care during the period.....” By stating a timescale, the Information Governance team may be able to get the information back to you quicker and clearer.

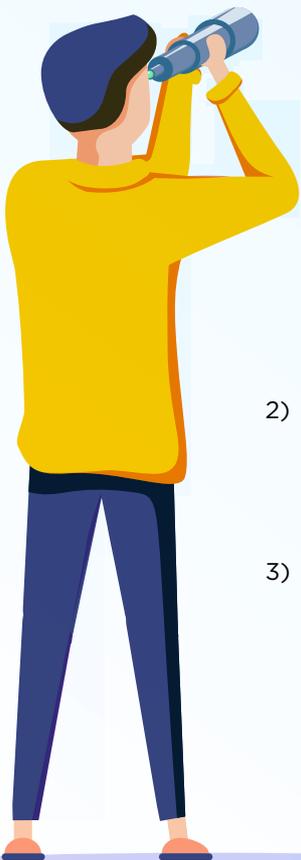


Is there a charge to gain my information?

No - although there can be if you make repeat requests for the same or similar information.

What can I expect?

- 1) Not everyone is in the right place to see their information when they first request it. Talk to your PA first about this, as we can talk you through it. It may be that your PA can talk to you about the information you need without needing to get the records.
- 2) If you do want to make a Subject Access Request (SAR), have a think about exactly what it is you want to see. A lot of the young people we work with want to see the information that was recorded around the time they went into care. So you could ask for the information within a specified time period.
- 3) The Information Governance team will contact your PA to discuss the request - this is to confirm your ID but also to discuss what support will be in place for you when you get this information. This is so important. Reading information from your files can be very emotional and distressing and we want to support you through this. We also have close links to counselling support such as Beacon, so we can refer you to them.



- 4) When the Information Governance team are preparing your request, they have to block out any information about other people as this information is confidential to those people. So be prepared for this – it can look very bitty – here is an example of what it could look like:

This is why it is sometimes better to just talk to your PA about what information you want and they can support you that way.

- 5) The sort of information that you can expect to receive includes the following:

- Daily record sheets
- Social care assessments
- Notes of concern
- Chronologies
- Meeting notes
- Other relevant records

- 6) The Information Governance team usually have the information prepared for you within a month, unless it is a very complex or lengthy request which may take longer. Your PA will let you know about this.

- 7) When your information is ready the Information Governance team will contact you and your PA. You can then arrange a time with your PA to meet and go through the information. This is really important as your PA will be able to answer any questions that you have about your information as well as the process and why some information may have been taken out. Your PA can also make sure you have access to the emotional support you need as this is often a very emotional, and sometimes traumatic, process for some young people. So please do make use of the support we can offer you.

Subject Access Request (SAR) form - original

A subject access request has been received in July 2023 by John Smith (DOB: 11/10/2000) for access to all social care records about himself dated from his time with Stockport social services.

John has the right to access to records about himself, however, his access to records which are only about another living person is dependent on their consent (information only about another data subject such as a sibling). Where possible or appropriate, information about others will be redacted to follow Schedule 2, Part 3, 16 (1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

As shown below, it may not always be necessary to remove information about other data subjects which is likely to be known to the requester or which indicates a shared contact with the requester or relation to the requester.

DOB	First name	Family Name	Gender	DOB	Ethnicity	Address
000	John	Smith	Male	11/10/2000	White British	1 Main Street, S43 5DD
000	Rebecca	Smith	Female	01/08/2002	White British	1 Main Street, S43 5DD

Entered by: Joe Briggs
 Concerning: Smith, John (001)
Redacted
 John & Rebecca, who are subject to a CP Plan, live with their mother Jane at 7, Main Street, S43 5DD. He is the family's carer.
 David
 David Smith, the child's father, is now in a new relationship with Kate Jones and they are living at 12, Park Road, S43 5DD. John Smith is not always permitted to remove information about other data subjects, which was maintained by Stockport social care services until 2024, before moving to 12, Park Road, S43 5DD, with her mother.
 Mr Smith has supervised contact twice a week with the children.

John has often been cooperative with social services, but has shown concerning behaviour towards his mother. He has a history of substance misuse, with his last drink being consumed on 12/07/2023. He has a current mental health problem, but of a 2-year span from an early age and showing a pattern of recurrent episodes (relapse when entering care).

Rebecca attends Main End School. Her reports indicate she is performing well in a range of subjects and has potential to go to the most able Geography and Science. She has a small circle of friends who are close with her, including her cousin. Rebecca was diagnosed with a mental health condition in 2023 and continues to attend school's appointments. Mr Smith has used the past year to have his child from Stockport Practice during lockdown with her, and has shown a positive health but on many visits, though Rebecca struggles to be comfortable in front of him.

John
 John attends Main End School, and has shown good achievement in some subjects but has attendance issues and can be disruptive in class. Lack of attention and discipline from his mother may have affected his school performance and general behaviour outside home. John is often keen to get on touch with his father, and enjoys their contact during the week.

Subject Access Request (SAR) form - blocked out

A subject access request has been received in July 2023 by John Smith (DOB: 11/10/2000) for access to all social care records about himself dated from his time with Stockport social services.

John has the right to access to records about himself, however, his access to records which are only about another living person is dependent on their consent (information only about another data subject such as a sibling). Where possible or appropriate, information about others will be redacted to follow Schedule 2, Part 3, 16 (1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

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John has often been cooperative with social services, but has shown concerning behaviour towards his mother.

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More information and support

The Care Leavers Association – Watch this video about care experienced adults talking about their experiences of accessing their files: <https://youtu.be/xs28tczL3yA>
Tel: 0161 236 5665 www.careleavers.com

Emotional Health support – Beacon Counselling – For adults and young people (talk to the Leaving Care Team about a fast track referral)
Tel: 0161 285 1827 www.beacon-counselling.org.uk

TLC Talk/Listen/Change – Offer a range of services to help you with your relationships, whether you're young or old, straight or gay, single or in a relationship. Providing a range of counselling services to help with the issues affecting you.
Tel: 0161 872 1100 www.talklistenchange.org.uk

Stockport Healthy Minds – Offer support and treatment for those who are experiencing symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, low mood, stress, worry or anxiety, feelings of hopelessness or panic attacks.
Tel: 0161 419 5725 www.penninecare.nhs.uk

The Women's Centre – Support and counselling services for women in Stockport.
Tel: 0161 355 4455 www.stockportwomenscentre.co.uk

Samaritans – provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicide.
Call free on 116 123 www.samaritans.org



For more information about Access to Records for care leavers, please visit the Care Leavers Association website www.careleavers.com/what-we-do/access-to-records

