

Bexley Social Services:

Data Protection:

**How we look after your
personal information and
how to access it.**



Bexley Social Services

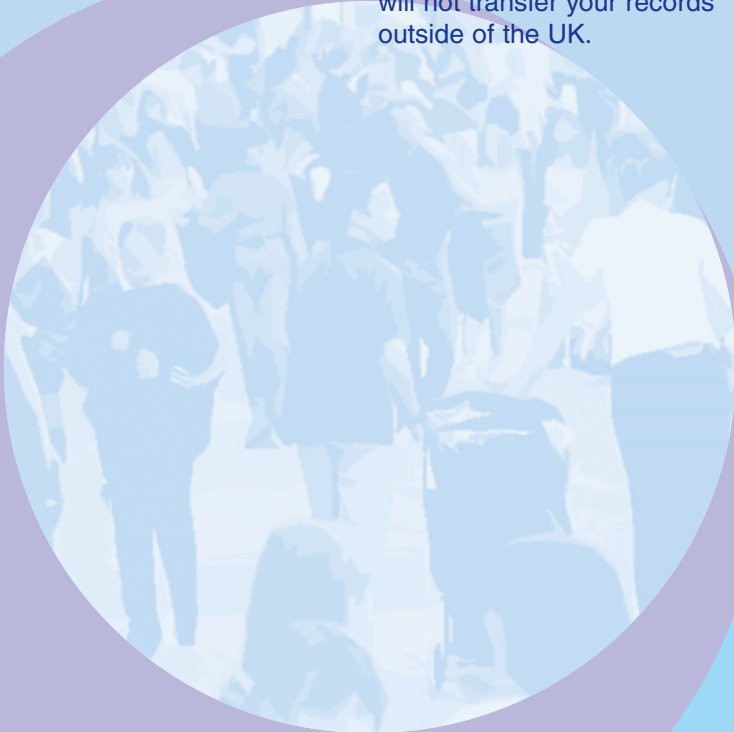
Bexley Social Services keeps information about the people it provides with services and advice.

All personal data is processed in accordance with your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Why are personal records kept?

The information we hold helps us to decide the best way to help people. We need to keep this information to help plan and provide the correct services for you.

After you have finished receiving services from us, we may keep the information we hold about you if it seems likely that you might need our services again, or we are requested by law to do so. We will not keep your records for longer than is necessary, and we will not transfer your records outside of the UK.



What sort of information is kept?

When you ask for help or advice from us, we collect information about your personal and family circumstances.

Other people, for example members of your family, doctors or teachers, might also give information. We keep notes of meetings and conversations with you and with other people.

We will ensure that your personal data is relevant, accurate and kept up-to-date.

Who can see the information held about me?

Only staff that are involved in providing your services. This may include social workers, care managers, occupational therapists, mental health workers and some administrative staff.

Occasionally, we may also share some information with other staff who do not work for Bexley Social Services. This may include, for example, your GP or other NHS health care provider.

In circumstances where disclosure of personal data is necessary, and when considering who may see information about you, our staff use the following principles:

1. Ask for your consent at the outset.
2. Only share information with those who need to know in order to provide you with good quality care.
3. Share the minimum information necessary to ensure good quality care.

We will tell you why and when information is to be transferred or exchanged between different parts of the service, and seek your agreement to do this.

All Council staff are required to abide by a strict code of conduct on confidentiality.

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How is my information stored?

Bexley Social Services has security measures in place to safeguard the confidentiality of your records and prevent any unlawful access to your personal data:

- ◆ Restricted access to Council buildings means that only authorised staff members are able to gain entry to areas where records are kept
- ◆ Passwords on computer records means that only case-workers with a need to know have access to your information
- ◆ Locked systems are in place for paper records.
- ◆ Relevant archived material is placed on microfiche and access to it is restricted

Will information held about me be used for any other purpose?

We will use your information for the provision of social care services to you.

Occasionally, we are required by law to report appropriate information to the authorities, for example as a result of a court order. There may be some instances when it is necessary to share information with other departments.

If you ask us to investigate a complaint, the appropriate staff will need to examine your records.



Can I see the information held about me?

Yes. Under the Data Protection Act, you have the right to see the information we hold about you.

This includes both paper records and those held on computer.

This right also extends to children and young people under the age of 18 who understand what it means to exercise this right. If a child or young person under the age of 18 does not have sufficient understanding to make their own request, a person with parental responsibility may do so on their behalf, if it is in the child's interest.

We will withhold information only in exceptional circumstances, for example if seeing something could seriously harm your physical or mental health, or if the information is about someone else. We will only withhold the minimum amount of information necessary.

How can I see my records?

There is a £10.00 charge to view your records. You should put your request to view your records in writing, specifying what it is you want to see, and give this to the member of staff you normally have contact with.

We will arrange for you to view your records within 40 days of receiving your request. It is important that we guard against unauthorised people seeing information about you, so we will ask you to provide some means of identification.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a friend or relative when you view your records.

Usually, the member of staff you normally have contact with will be present when you see your file, and will be able to explain anything that you may find difficult to understand.

protection

What can I do if I think the information held about me is inaccurate?

If you think the facts recorded about you are wrong, you should point this out to the member of staff you normally deal with, and ask for the details to be erased or corrected.

If we agree that the information is inaccurate, we will correct or erase it. Also, any expression of opinion based on the inaccurate information will be erased.

You will be able to see a copy of the amended record.

If you are not happy with a decision not to correct your records, you can ask the Head of Committee Services to reconsider this decision. The member of staff you normally deal with can give you details of how to do this.

Useful organisations:

Data Protection Commission

 01625 545 745

Thamesmead Law Centre

 020 8311 0555

Citizen's Advice Bureau (Bexleyheath)

 020 8303 5100

(Erith)

 01322 340481

information

Other leaflets from Social Services:

Here are some examples of leaflets from Social Services. Other leaflets on specific services are also available.

- ◆ Bexley Social Services:
Here to Help
- ◆ Help from Social Services for Older People and their Carers
- ◆ Help from Social Services for people with Physical or Sensory Impairments and their Carers
- ◆ Help from Social Services for people with Learning Disabilities and their Carers
- ◆ Bexley Social Services:
Community Mental Health Teams
- ◆ Help from Social Services for Carers
- ◆ Help from Social Services for Children and Families
- ◆ Bexley Social Services:
The Drug and Alcohol Care Management Team
- ◆ Help from Social Services for people with HIV and AIDS and their Carers
- ◆ Better Care Higher Standards Charter
- ◆ Comments, Complaints & Suggestions

Details of all services can also be found on the Council's website:
www.bexley.gov.uk

Copies of all leaflets are available in several community languages and also in large print or on tape for blind and partially sighted people. For tapes and leaflets, please contact the Communications Officer on 020 8836 8069.

If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference: 602677/11.07

