

Why we keep information about you and your family

Q. Why do you need to keep information about my family?

A. To make sure that all organisations in Swindon can help you and your family as much as possible we need to keep information about your family on computer and paper records. Staff in the organisations, need the information so they can give the best advice possible. We might also use the information to let you know about opportunities and events that might interest you, or to review our services and do research.

Once you have given us information and you want to get help from another organisation, you can give us permission to share the information we already have about you. This means that you don't have to give all the information again.

Q. What information do you keep?

A. We keep information about:

- Your family members - name, address, phone numbers, date of birth, gender & ethnic origin
- Your circumstances - issues, needs, difficulties, disabilities, or benefits that you have talked about with us, but only when you say we can do so or the law requires us to
- Your children's school, education or training
- Details of your family's GP
- Details of any contacts you have had with the other service and actions we may have taken.

Q. Where does the information come from?

A. Our information comes from different sources:

- Most of the information comes from our contact with your family
- Some information may come from schools, organisations, which know your family, your health visitor or the school nurse. Usually they will have told you the information that is held about your family unless they think you are likely to suffer significant harm.

Q. Where and how do you keep this information?

A. We keep information on our computer systems and as paper records on files. The computer systems are secure and can only be accessed by approved staff. The paper records are kept in lockable filing cabinets.

Q. How long will you keep information about my family?

A. Each agency will only keep information for as long as it is necessary. In some cases organisations are required by law to keep information for specified periods.

- Q. How will I know what information you hold about my family, and if it is accurate and up-to-date?
- A. We do all we can to ensure our data is accurate and up-to-date. You can ask to see your records. In the first instance this will be information about you and your children. Once a young person has sufficient understanding, we will ask their permission before we can give you information about them. You will need to ask to see your records by letter. Once an organisation has received your request, they will write back to you, usually after 10 days. Then after a further 40 days you will get a copy of your records or you will be asked to go to the office to look at the records. Please note, some agencies charge for this service.

Q. Will you show my family's records to anyone?

- A. We may share basic details about you so that we can keep your records accurate and up-to-date. We may also share information with others who can help you but only if you think this is a good idea and complete a consent form.

Wherever possible we will encourage your children to share information with you. However, once they have sufficient understanding, they have a right to confidentiality and we may not pass all information onto you without their agreement. We will discuss this with you and explain our reasons.

Please note that there might be exceptional circumstances when we will pass on information about you or your children to another agency – it might be a requirement of the law, or perhaps we believe you or your child or others might come to harm.

Q. How will I know who you are passing my information on to?

- A. The consent form, which you sign to give us permission to pass on your information will list the people and organisations, who will receive the information. This permission will last for one year. If we need to pass your details to somebody else, perhaps for a different reason, or after 1 year, we will need to ask for your permission again.

Q. What if I don't want certain details about me passed on?

- A. You can refuse to sign the form or tell us what information you don't want to be passed on, but remember the exceptional circumstances.

Q. What if I agree that you can pass on information and later change my mind?

- A. Even if you agree at first, you have the right later to change your mind. All you need to do is let us know in writing that you no longer want us to do this.

Q. Can I trust the organisations you pass my information on to will not to pass it on again to other people?

- A. Yes you can. Our agreement with them states clearly that they are not allowed to pass on any information about you without your consent.

If you have any questions about your personal information, please contact the Data Controller, Swindon Borough Council, Civic Offices, Swindon SN12JH or the Data Controller of another agency you are in contact with.