

**Care Leavers and Access to Social Care Files;
A multi-agency round table discussion on Data Protection, SAR and Support**

Background

As a founding member of the Access to Records Campaign Group (ACRCG), the CLA access to records campaign has led to the government's latest revision of the guidance about how local authorities should respond when a person who has grown up in care asks to see their care file. The Guidance is statutory guidance: local authorities are required to follow this unless there is a good reason not to. This guidance is in Volume 3 of government guidance called Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers>

This guidance states that care leavers have a fundamental right to access information held on their care records and it is very clear that the principles and standards for good practice apply to all care leavers regardless of their age. There is an important reminder to the local authority that it should not withhold information about people in the care leaver's family if the care leaver already knows or has this information, which has an impact on levels of redaction and means the case worker must engage the care leaver to identify what is already known and to identify any support needs.

Experience tells us that there is a 'post code lottery' when it comes to care leavers getting a good service when seeking access to their records. This is not helped by the lack of knowledge across all relevant departments of local authorities' regards data protection and the specific needs of care leavers. To address this we must develop a collaborative approach to raising awareness of this guidance and how it can help practitioners and their manager's better support care leavers in accessing their files, whilst also ensuring user led perspectives are central to policy developments and implementation.

Purpose

Being **outcome focused** the roundtable has the aims of;

- **Promoting engagement across key agencies** concerned with the recording, retention and access to the social care files of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers
- **Developing and promoting innovative approaches** to national partnership working with LAC/Care Leavers in the development of services that address their individual needs
- **Promoting transparency, openness and accountability of public services** to LAC and Care Leavers, in view of the overwhelming impact of public services on their life chances and quality of life
- **Providing training and information** on the needs of LAC/Care Leavers, their emotional well-being and how this is impacted by the process of accessing their file(s)
- **Ensuring user led perspectives are central** to policy developments and implementation

The three **key outcomes** from the roundtable are to;

- 1) Develop an **action plan** based on discussion (this is the responsibility of the campaign group to take forward)
- 2) To implement a **working group** to ensure key action points are picked up and taken forward

It's my journey: it's my life!!

**Care Leavers and Access to Social Care Files;
A multi-agency round table discussion on Data Protection, SAR and Support**

3) The action plan is to be underpinned by a **working paper** to be developed from the discussion

Key Themes

The roundtable discussion will focus on a number of key themes identified through a wider body of work within the CLA with care leavers and by partner organisations.

- Legal Parameters
- Working together
- Identification of needs
- Data sharing
- Peer Led Support
- Advocacy
- Being Proactive
- Training and Awareness
- Research, investigation and gap analysis

WHO?

We are concerned with three groups

- 1) LAC, former LAC and relevant YP up to 18
- 2) Young Adults, with care experience and former relevant YP 18 -25
- 3) Adults with a care experience 25+

The discussion will be chaired by Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, who has been the Parliamentarian lead taking forward the campaign work of the ACRCG, which is made of:

- The Care Leavers' Association
- The British Association for Adoption and Fostering
- The Association of Child Abuse Lawyers
- The Post Care Forum
- Barnardo's

WHERE?

English Regions (Cities and venues TBC)

WHEN?

Winter/Spring 2015

It's my journey: it's my life!!

**Care Leavers and Access to Social Care Files;
A multi-agency round table discussion on Data Protection, SAR and Support**

CONTACT

Darren Coyne
Projects and Development Manager
The Care Leavers' Association
40 Fountain Street
Room 6
4th Floor
Manchester
M2 2BE

T. 0161 637 5040

M. 0790 448 5921

E. darren.coyne@careleavers.com