



Health and Social Services Councils



Eastern Health and Social Services Council
19 Bedford Street
BELFAST BT2 7EJ
Phone: 028 9032 1230
Minicom: 028 9032 1285
Freephone: 0800 3285420



Northern Health and Social Services Council
8 Broadway Avenue
BALLYMENA BT43 7AA
Phone: 028 2565 5777
Minicom: 028 2565 5777



Southern Health and Social Services Council
Quaker Buildings, High Street
Lurgan BT66 8BB
Phone: 028 3834 9900
Minicom: 028 3834 6488



Western Health and Social Services Council
Hilltop
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital
OMAGH BT79 0NS
Phone: 028 8225 2555

Health and Social Services Boards

Eastern Health and Social Services Board
12-22 Linenhall Street
BELFAST BT2 8BS
Phone: 028 9032 1313

Southern Health and Social Services Board
Tower Hill
Armagh BT61 9DR
Phone: 028 3741 0041

Northern Health and Social Services Board
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
BALLYMENA BT42 1QB
Phone: 028 2565 3333

Western Health and Social Services Board
15 Gransha Park
Clooney Road
LONDONDERRY BT47 1TG
Phone: 028 7186 0086

Other useful phone numbers

Central Services Agency
25 Adelaide Street
BELFAST BT2 8FH
Phone: 028 9032 4431



Your guide to:
seeing your medical records



Health and Social Services Councils for Northern Ireland



Which records can be seen?

- Written medical records.
- Records held on computer.
- Social Services records.

The exceptions are described later in this leaflet.

Who holds and gives access to records?

- GPs.
- Hospitals.
- Dentists.
- Social workers.
- Other healthcare professionals.

Who can see your medical records?

- You.
- Anyone who has your written permission.
- Your parent or guardian if you are under 16 and you agree or if the person holding your records feels it is in your best interests.
- A representative appointed by a court if you cannot manage your own affairs.
- After you have died, your personal representative.

How do you apply to see your records?

First ask the person holding your records if you can see what has been written. If your request is denied you have a legal right to ask again in writing.

The record holder may ask you to fill in a form or apply in writing. Remember Health and Social Services may hold a number of records about you and you may need to make several applications to different organisations. If you need help to apply contact your local Health and Social Services Council. When you have filled in the form, send it to the person holding your records.

How long do you have to wait to see the records?

Some times your records will not be available immediately. However it should take:

- No more than 21 days (if the record has been added to in the last 40 days); or
- No more than 40 days (if the record has not been added to in the last 40 days).

In certain circumstances, it may take an extra 14 days.

How much does it cost?

In some cases the record holder can charge you a fee for accessing your records and / or providing a photocopy of material you ask for. For more detailed information on when and what can be charged contact your Health and Social Services Council.

What happens if you do not understand the records?

The person holding the records must explain any part of the record which you cannot understand.

When can information be held back?

- If they are a deceased patient's records made before 30 May 1994 (except where they explain something written on or after that date).
- When, in the opinion of the person holding the records, seeing the information is likely to cause serious harm to your physical or mental health, or that of another person.
- When it is about, or has been given by, anyone except a doctor or another professional involved in your care, unless that other person gives their permission.
- When it contains information you expressly said must not be revealed.
- After your death, if the information is not directly relevant to a claim arising from your death.

The person holding the records decides whether or not any information should be held back. He or she does not have to tell you about this unless you ask.

How do you challenge mistakes in the records?

If you think any record is not accurate, you can ask the person holding the records to correct them. The person holding the records must either make the change or note your disagreement in the records. The person holding the records must give you a copy of the correction or the note free of charge.

How do you make a complaint?

If you think your rights to see your records have been unfairly denied, or that the law has not been followed, you have the right to complain. If you are not satisfied with the result of your complaint, you have the right to take the matter to court.

For more information on making a complaint, contact your Health and Social Services Council.

You have a right to be treated politely and with respect for your privacy and dignity