Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Access to information (case files/records)

Any person is entitled to apply for access to information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act).

Types of information – You can request personal or non-personal information. Personal information includes information about you, such as your placement and time in care. Non-personal information includes government policy documents, research and data materials and information about other persons (third-party information). Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act you are able to apply to have personal information about yourself amended.

This flowchart was developed in collaboration with Create Foundation WA and young people with an out-of-home care experience.

I want information about myself
(Still in care)

Contact your local district office
(Metropolitan or country)

Speak with your caseworker or another officer in the local district office about the type of information you want. This can include information about yourself or information about someone else (a third-party).

You can find out about your family, about why you are/were in care, about your brothers/sisters or why they are/were put in different foster care homes.

I want information about myself
(No longer in care)

I am under 25 years

Contact any local district office
(metropolitan or country)

to assist with your queries. You can also make a request for your child history folder if you did not receive one when you left care or if you lost or misplaced original documents from the folder.

Or contact the FOI unit on 6414 3344 or FOI@communities.wa.gov.au.

I am 25 years or older

I want information about someone else (third-party information)
(Still in care/no longer in care)

Contact the Freedom Of Information unit
For access to the Department's case files and records. Refer to the website for more information on FOI or to download the FOI application form at www.communities.wa.gov.au/FOI

Contact the FOI unit on 6414 3344 or FOI@communities.wa.gov.au.

Lodge an FOI application
Must be in writing via letter, email or by completing Form 34: Application for Access to Information, found on the Department's website.

In three working days, your application will be acknowledged by letter/email.

Notice of decision
Within 45 calendar days, the FOI unit will send you a letter called **Notice of Decision** which will include reasons about the decision to access information and the right to review.

Still nothing after 45 calendar days
If you do not receive a **Notice of Decision** within 45 calendar days, contact the FOI unit.

Access to information
You will either be provided with complete access, some access or no access to information that you want.

Process

Internal review
If you are not satisfied with the decision, you can request an internal review within 30 days of receiving the Notice of Decision.

The Department has 15 days to respond.

External review
If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you have the right to seek an external review from the Office of the Information Commissioner. Visit www.oic.wa.gov.au.

You are concerned about the information on file (it is incomplete, incorrect, out-of-date or misleading)

If you are still in care, inform your caseworker.

If no longer in care and under 25 years old, contact your local district office.

If over 25 years old, contact the FOI unit.

Still not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, contact the FOI unit for advice.

Useful information

Your rights

You have the right to contact the FOI unit directly whether you are in care or have left care. However, it is easier if you ask your caseworker to get the information for you.

Information about someone else

There are rules about accessing information about someone else. Refer to the FAQs on the Department's website or FOI unit for information. A fee is charged to get information about someone else. Information about yourself is free of charge. Contact the FOI unit who can advise about fee charges and information you might be able to access.

Child history folder

Every child/young person exiting the CEO's care is entitled to their child history folder (the folder). The Department will keep photocopies of your original documents. The folder includes original documents and paperwork like your:

- birth certificate
- school reports
- medical reports
- personal photographs
- family tree.

If you leave care before you turn 18, your folder is usually given to your guardian or parent - they will go through the contents with you.

If you leave care at 18, you can ask the caseworker or someone else to go through the folder with you.

If you lose your folder or any original documents, contact your former district office to get copies of the originals.

Contact the Department to connect to the local district office of your choice on **1800 176 888**.

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