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If you (or a member of your family) have had access to services from the Child and Family Agency or spent time in 'care', there will likely be files that are personal to you, your family and your story.

You won't see these files on a website, or in a book, because they are private, personal, and confidential to you.

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People look for their personal files or records for different reasons – everyone's story is different. It can take a long time to actually make the decision to approach an organisation and ask about your files.



Many people have found that the experience of reading their files has a strong emotional impact on them.

The Staff at both the Child and Family Agency and EPIC would like to assist you making this process as supportive as possible.



Check us out online  
[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)  
[www.epiconline.ie](http://www.epiconline.ie)



## My Files



This leaflet was created with the hard work and dedication of the Young People (12 - 17 year olds) from the **Dublin South Central Fora**. This leaflet was inspired by their wishes to be able with the support of their Social Workers to have access to their files and the information that is stored about them and their families.

**Supported by:**

**EPIC (Empowering People in Care)** is a national organisation that works with and for children who are currently living in care and those with care experience. EPIC ensures that the voice of children and young people is heard in decisions that affect their lives and that they understand and know their rights.



**Tusla (The Child and Family Agency)**

Make sure that children are safe, healthy and happy. We work with families and our friends to make sure children live somewhere they always feel cared for and wanted. Sometimes this happens in the family home. Sometimes it can happen in a children's home or a foster carer's home, depending on what is best for everyone. Our main job is to make sure children are safe and well.

**? What is a file?**  
A file is where information is kept about you, your family and your contact with the Social Work Team. Some information may include education reports, child in care review reports, your family history, specialist reports, and medical reports. The file may also include other records such as letters, cards and appointment cards. Your information may be stored in a physical paper file or as a computer file in the Social Work office.

**? Who sees my file?**  
Your Social Worker and the Social Work Team Leader see your file. If you live in residential care the staff will see your residential file. Other people who will see your files are Inspectors and Monitors who make sure that the information in your file is correct, that your information is being recorded properly and up to date.

**? Can I see my file?**  
Yes. Talk to your Social Worker or Keyworker about what you want to know. If they agree that it is a good time for you to see it, they will arrange for you to see your file in the Social Work office or residential centre. If the Social Worker does not agree that this is a good time to see your file they will arrange a time with you to meet and explain the reasons why.

**? Will I be able to see everything in my file?**  
Your Social Worker/ Keyworker will explain if there are some parts of your files that you can't see e.g. third party information (information about other people or family members) or they believe you are not ready to hear yet. What you can see in your file will also depend on what information is contained in your file. Your Social Worker/ Keyworker will be able to explain to you if you cannot read some parts of your file.

**? Where is my file kept?**  
Your file is kept safe in the Social Work office, all files are treated with respect for your privacy and are stored in a secure filing cabinet.

**? Who can be with me when I see my file?**  
Your Social Worker or Keyworker will be with you when you are reading your file. Talk to your Social Worker if you would like another person to support you with this.

**? Can I take copies?**  
You can ask your Social Worker/ Keyworker if you would like copies of some of the information. You may not be able to have copies of everything you ask for.

**? What if I'm not happy with the information on my file?**  
If you see information on your file that you believe is wrong or you are unhappy with, you can ask your Social Worker to write your own note on your file about your feedback on this.

