



Looking for records of Erdington Cottage Homes?

Case files

If you spent time in the Cottage Homes, you will have a case file created by your social work team. You have a legal right (under the Data Protection Act) to see your case file. To see your file, you should apply in writing, providing proof of your identity, and giving as much detail as possible about the children's homes you were in (including dates and the name and address of the homes). Alternatively, you can complete a Subject Access Request form, which can be obtained from the same team. Even if you complete a form, proof of identity and details of the homes will still be needed.

Data Protection & Freedom of Information Team
Children, Young People & Families Directorate
Birmingham City Council
Martineau Centre
Balden Road
Birmingham B32 2EH
0121 464 4591

If you are one person in a family of children who were in care, it may be that you share your case file with your siblings. Ideally you should apply jointly to look at the family case file. This, however, is not always possible in which case the City Council may only release certain documents from the case which relate to you alone and not your brothers and sisters.

Unfortunately, as is the case in many other local authorities, many historical case files (relating to periods of time prior to the 1980s) were not kept and so it is likely that many searches will not be fruitful. There are some registers of the Homes held at Birmingham Archives and Heritage (also accessed through the above team, not Archives and Heritage) which will be searched if your case file cannot be found.

Further information about accessing information about your own time is available from the Care Leavers Association www.careleavers.com/accesstorecords.

Registers

Birmingham Archives and Heritage, based at Birmingham's Central Library, have some registers relating to Erdington Cottage Homes. These are large, handwritten registers which contain basic details – name, date of birth, time brought into the home, time left. Sometimes there are other details such as next of kin or reason for being brought into care. The Archives do not have a complete set of registers so it is possible that the time in which you are interested may not be covered.

If you have deceased relatives, you can apply for permission to see the information about them in the registers – you cannot see the original registers as they contain information about other individuals which the Archives have to protect. Apply to the team above in the first instance.

There are also some registers which relate to the time prior to 1911 – as this is 100 years ago the Data Protection Act does not apply and thus anyone can see the registers (as long as they are in suitable condition to be handled). To enquire about seeing the registers, please contact the Archives on 0121 303 4549.