



# CHAIN: INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS

## What is CHAIN?

CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) is a database that is used to record information about people who have been worked with by outreach teams in London. The system is designed to ensure that people who have slept rough or otherwise spent time on the streets get the help they need, wherever they are in the city.

CHAIN allows homelessness services to keep a record of the work they have done with you, and to easily see what your needs are, so they can help you access services such as accommodation, advice, or help with benefits. Some accommodation services will only accept people who have been recorded as a rough sleeper on CHAIN.

## Who manages CHAIN?

CHAIN is managed by Homeless Link, and is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Homeless Link is a 'controller' of the information on CHAIN and is jointly responsible for your information, together with the services that add your information to the system.

## Why is my information being recorded on CHAIN?

Services that record information on CHAIN work on behalf of public authorities, to help people who have slept rough in London move away from the streets. They carry out this work in the public interest, to make sure that nobody has to sleep rough in their areas. This is sometimes referred to as the 'legal basis' for processing information.

## What information is recorded on CHAIN?

Information recorded on CHAIN includes:

- Basic personal details such as name, date of birth, and nationality, and some 'sensitive' details, such as ethnicity.
- Records of contacts with case workers, e.g. on the street or in a day centre.
- Arrivals and departures from hostels and other accommodation.
- Support needs information, such as whether you need support around alcohol or with your physical or mental health.
- Other information that will help to ensure workers understand the services you need, such as whether you have been in the armed forces, care or prison.
- Information about your sexual orientation, if you tell us about this.
- Information about your immigration status, if you tell us about this.

## Who can see this information?

Information held on CHAIN is only available to carefully selected organisations and workers who really need to see it. These include outreach teams, No Second Night Out assessment hubs, hostels, day centres and some health services. The information is also available to staff at local authorities who are responsible for funding such services, and developing plans to reduce or end homelessness. Information is only shared with the police if there is a concern about someone's immediate safety, or if they need information relating to a very serious offence.

Information from CHAIN is also used in statistics and research to help find ways to end homelessness. Names and other information that could identify an individual are never included in research and statistical reports.

### **How long will my information be kept?**

People can often unfortunately return to rough sleeping after long periods away from the streets, and when this happens it is helpful for services working with them to be able to look up information about their needs, and what services they previously accessed. You could also lose your entitlement to access certain services if your CHAIN record is deleted. For these reasons, your information will be held on CHAIN until 15 years after you last had anything recorded on the system.

### **What are my rights?**

You have a range of rights in relation to the information that is held about you on CHAIN. You can make a request to the CHAIN team at Homeless Link in relation to any of these rights, and they should usually provide a response within one month. You can make requests via a case worker or directly to the CHAIN team, but if you make a request directly you will need to supply documentation to confirm your identity.

You have the right to be informed about the processing of your information on CHAIN. This leaflet is designed to tell you everything you need to know about this, and is sometimes referred to as a 'privacy notice'.

You have the right to see a copy of the information that has been recorded about you on CHAIN.

If you think that any information that has been recorded about you on CHAIN is inaccurate, you can ask for it to be corrected. The CHAIN team will discuss this with you, and with the services that recorded the information, to see if changes need to be made.

You have the right to object to your information being processed, if you think that this is not justified in your particular case. The CHAIN team will discuss this with you, and with services that have recorded information about you, to see if they need to follow your objection.

You have the right to ask for your information to be erased. However, your request may only be followed in certain circumstances, such as if you have successfully objected to your information being processed.

You have the right to request that your information is restricted from being accessed or used. You might request this temporarily while other requests you make are being investigated, or permanently if you have successfully objected to your information being processed.

### **Who can I contact if I have a question or complaint?**

If you have any questions about CHAIN, or would like to make a request in relation to any of the rights described above, you can contact the **CHAIN team** at Homeless Link on 020 7840 4451 or [chain@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:chain@homelesslink.org.uk).

If you are unhappy about how your information has been used on CHAIN, you can make a complaint to **Homeless Link** by contacting them on 020 7840 4430 or [complaints@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:complaints@homelesslink.org.uk).

If you are still unhappy, you can complain to the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**, which is the body that regulates data protection in the UK. You can contact them on 0303 123 1113 or via their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Further copies of this leaflet can be downloaded from [www.homeless.org.uk/chain](http://www.homeless.org.uk/chain).