

UNIVERSAL CREDIT ESSENTIALS

Confidentiality/Disclosure Guidance for Volunteers

Scope

The aim of this guidance is to ensure service user information is kept confidential. However, the same principles apply to information about the company, your colleagues and other professionals with whom you come in contact.

You also need to read 'Device Policy for Volunteers'.

Handling Of Information

Service users and your colleagues have a right to expect that personal information about them and their families will remain confidential and be treated with respect.

Make sure you:

- keep all personal / sensitive information confidential;
- take care when discussing a service user or a colleague that your conversation cannot be overheard or seen by someone outwith the organisation;
- do not share (either accidentally or intentionally) confidential information about a service user with others (for example their family, friends, carers) against the person's wishes.

Never gossip or discuss private affairs about a service user or colleague, either verbally or in electronic correspondence, such as email or messaging service.

Remember that, as well as information written in a person's file, anything held electronically can be disclosed to them (subject to certain exemptions) if they make a subject access request under GDPR.

There will always be a senior member of staff available who is able to help you with any concerns you have regarding confidentiality. Concerns could include:

- other people not keeping to the confidentiality policy;
- information you have been given in confidence that worries you (see also 'Making a disclosure below').

Inappropriate Breaches Of Confidentiality

A breach of confidentiality occurs when information provided in confidence by a service user or staff member is passed on to a third party without the person's consent. Breaches of confidentiality may happen intentionally or by accident.

You must never share confidential information about service users or staff members to other people outside the organisation (without the person's consent), and only share it within the organisation on a need to know basis.

Making A Disclosure

If you are asked to disclose confidential information about a service user or staff member, contact your Volunteer Manager for advice before saying anything.

There may be **exceptional circumstances**, however, in which you need to override your duty of confidentiality, without first getting consent from the person concerned. Examples include:

- to protect someone from grave and imminent danger;
- to prevent abuse or harm;
- if there is likelihood of a violent response if you ask for consent to pass on information;
- if you learn a criminal offence has been or is likely to be committed;
- to safeguard national security.

In such a situation as outlined in above:

- if possible, consult the person's representative
- contact your Volunteer Manager for guidance and support
- contact the emergency services as necessary by phoning 999 or 112.

Briefing And Induction

Your Volunteer Manager is responsible for assessing the roles undertaken by volunteers within the organisation and the level of briefing/induction you need in relation to this guidance.

Acceptance

You are required to indicate that you have received, read and understood the content of this guidance as directed by your Volunteer Manager and on completion of your briefing and induction, it is your personal responsibility to follow it.