



Confidentiality Policy

The confidentiality policy will apply equally to young people, staff, volunteers and management group members.

Outreach youth is committed to adopting practices and procedures which ensure confidentiality in respect of information relating to young people using the project. Within the project young people will be respected as responsible individuals in their own right and never solely in terms of their issues and concerns.

Confidentiality issues will be covered in all induction programmes for staff and volunteers.

Internal Confidentiality

Information may be shared regarding individual young people within the team where it is regarded as being beneficial to the needs of the young person. Individuals should be made aware of this and no promises made that we will never share information and issues within the team. It can be made clear at the time that staff may need to do this, not only for staff support, but to provide a better service for individuals. Care will be taken to ensure that issues are not discussed within the hearing of others who are not part of the team. Some information regarding young people may need to be discussed in support and supervision meetings.

Information to Third Parties

As a general rule, except in exceptional circumstances (see below), no information about a particular individual with whom we are working will be given to any third party or agency without the permission of the individual concerned. Where possible, the individual concerned should be in the presence of the worker when consented information sharing is taking place. Where this is not possible, the individual should be informed of the contact and substance of the conversation as soon as possible. No information will be requested of third parties regarding individuals by staff without the prior permission of the person concerned.

Exceptional Circumstances

There may be occasions when exceptional circumstances prevail, for example when the person or a third party are at risk or in immediate danger. There is no prescriptive list to cover all occasions, but examples could be:

- where the person concerned is clearly putting themselves at risk e.g. involved in an accident, suffering from a drug overdose

- where the emotional or mental state of the person concerned is such that it puts their own or third parties lives or safety at risk
- where a third party is at risk of danger or abuse, e.g. where a sibling is left within the family and is being abused
- where the issue raised relates to Child Protection/Safeguarding , i.e. situations of abuse affecting young people under 16 years of age

In such cases staff should follow the organisation's procedures on dealing with such circumstances.

Records

The purpose of keeping records is to:

- Retain details of personal information such as medical needs, emergency contact details, permission slip and agreements for activities or assistance
- Track the progress of young people through programmes of education or participation
- Keep an up-to-date record of any support provided by the organisation including referring young people onto third parties, references etc.
- Any monitoring system in place will ensure complete anonymity.

Accuracy and Access

To ensure that records are as accurate as possible young people should be invited to counter-sign (or write if they choose) any recordings relating specifically to them.

A young person has the right to supervised access to any file on them and the right to challenge any record or part of a record in terms of its accuracy. Any such challenge will be noted on the record or with the agreement of the Youth Work Manager the record can be removed.

The organisation will offer to assist any young person to access their records by offering to read and explain them, have them translated or enlarged.

Security

All records pertaining to young people shall be kept in a secure lockable filing cabinet. Only relevant staff shall have access to the cabinet.

Destruction of Records

A review of the Young Persons Files will happen every 12 months in the first quarter of the financial year, following the annual statistical report.

All records of young people who have permanently left the organisation in the previous year (to the statistical return year) will be removed to the "dead files" and then destroyed by shredding after a further period of 6 months.

This policy will be displayed in the organisation's offices and venues, and all efforts will be made to ensure that individuals using the project are aware of this policy.