

# **Confidentiality Policy**

## **Compass Disability Services**

Units 11 – 12 Belvedere Trading Estate, Taunton, TA1 1BH

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### **Introduction**

Individuals have a right to confidentiality in respect of personal information insofar as this does not infringe the rights of other people. Compass Disability Services is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of its service users, employees and volunteers taking into consideration current legislation. All personal information will be dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded and used, in line with Data Protection legislation.

### **Definition**

Confidentiality means that details about other people should only be disclosed on a need to know basis. Any details of a personal nature will, where relevant, only be disclosed with the consent of the person concerned.

For the purpose of this policy “users” refer to anyone who uses any of the services or is involved with any of the projects facilitated by Compass Disability Services.

### **The Importance of Confidentiality**

We may all have experienced times when we have wanted the information we have shared to remain confidential. Feelings of betrayal and disappointment and distress can result if the confidence was broken. An important aspect of building trust in any relationship is based around maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.

### **Security of Private Information**

Staff and volunteers should not discuss personal information given to them by users, other volunteers or staff with anyone unless it is vital that the information is passed on for safety reasons, to enable the delivery of the relevant service or in the pursuance of the individuals role (e.g. Line Manager’s may need to share information about another person with the person responsible for Human Resources or Payroll).

Any information that you give will not be discussed with others without your consent and knowledge or if it falls into the above category. Exceptions maybe necessary as detailed in the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy & Procedures.

Where a staff member feels that it would be inappropriate to maintain a confidence, for example where one user asks you to keep information about another user confidential but where that information may be detrimental to others or the users involved, and where a safeguarding issue would not be compromised further, the staff member should inform the user that they are unable to maintain that confidence and should share the information with, in the first instance, their Line Manager.

In exceptional circumstances, such as court or police requests, details may be revealed to third parties at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or Operations Manager in their absence. The person involved shall be consulted and informed if appropriate, taking into account advice and guidance from the police or other relevant authority.

You should consult with the Chief Executive Officer immediately if you consider that there is any other good reason to break confidence.

It is the workers responsibility to ensure all records are kept secure. All records must be locked away at the end of each working day. This includes note books, copies of correspondence, calculation sheets and any other sources of information.

## **Offloading**

We may all need to off load about our work at times, but we must always be careful not to disclose information about the person or situation we are discussing, that would risk the privacy or identity of the person being disclosed unnecessarily. It is not just what we say, but how we may say it, that can break essential confidentiality. In sharing and offloading about our work, we must be sure to maintain discretion and protect and respect a person's dignity at all times. More often than not it is likely that the most appropriate person to offload to will be your Line Manager.

## **Policy Revisions**

This policy will be reviewed and amended every five years or as necessary, to reflect best practice and/or changes in legislation. All staff or volunteers should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of the policy through normal channels to the Chief Executive Officer.

## **Other Reading**

Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Security Policy