

NORTH BERWICK COASTAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections recognises that the handling of identifiable written, verbal and computerised information is necessary for effective functioning. Information is held and shared about service users, volunteers, and employees. The main aims of this policy are to:

- ☐ ensure that information given in trust is treated with respect
- ☐ ensure that information is protected through clarity about how it is to be stored and shared
- ☐ ensure that the boundaries of confidentiality are clear, and understood by all.

Aims of the policy

The aims are to:

- ☐ protect the best interests of service users, volunteers, and employees.
- ☐ make explicit the responsibilities of all parties concerning confidentiality
- ☐ ensure volunteers, and employees are aware of their responsibilities to protect confidential information.

Procedure when confidentiality is broken

Volunteers and employees are required to maintain confidentiality in accordance with this policy. Inappropriate disclosures will be treated as a disciplinary matter and dealt with by the (member of staff responsible), in accordance with our disciplinary procedures.

Exceptional disclosure of information

Exceptional circumstances may occur where the protection of a service user, volunteer, employee or a third party or another person must be ensured and to do so would involve disclosure of information, whether or not agreement has been reached with party affected.

In this situation, the volunteer or employee involved should follow the procedures set down in North Berwick Coastal Community Connections' Policy on Safeguarding.

The NBCCC staff member will conform with Health and Safety legislation by informing people of any notification received about contagious or notifiable disease suffered by any person with whom members of the workforce may have had contact in conducting their work.

In the event of a serious issue arising of a line management nature, (e.g. professional misconduct), volunteers or employees may, within the Policy, raise it with the (member of staff responsible) with or without the volunteer or employee's agreement and it will be dealt with in accordance with NBCCC's Complaints Procedure.

Finally, there is a legal requirement to disclose information in the event of a policy enquiry which has the back up of necessary legal documentation.

The befriending confidentiality triangle

Volunteers will not share any information about their service user or about visits to their service user with anyone except the NBCCC staff member. Volunteers must share all information relevant to the progress of the match and the safety and wellbeing of both parties with the NBCCC staff member. It is not acceptable for volunteers to withhold information from the NBCCC staff member, even at the request of the service user. The NBCCC staff member will inform service users (preferably in writing) of this three-way confidentiality at the outset of the befriending relationship.

Information and training

All volunteers, committee members and employees will be provided with this policy document and new volunteers, committee members and employees will receive a copy of this policy on taking up appointment. We will provide volunteer and employee training on issues relating to confidentiality and the contents of this policy in order to ensure that work practices are in line with the requirements. Employees will inform service users and carers of this policy document and ensure a copy is available to them.

Files containing personal information

Files containing information about staff, volunteers or service users are confidential, with access to a volunteer's or employee's file being limited to the NBCCC staff member and to

that individual at any time during office hours. The Administrator has access to these files only when personnel issues arise and to keep files up to date. Access to the personnel files is limited to the NBCCC staff members for the purposes already outlined. All files containing personal information will be kept in a secure location accessible only to the designated NBCCC staff members.

Personal issues affecting volunteers or employees

Volunteers and employees have the option of discussing personal issues adversely affecting their work in confidence with the NBCCC staff member. The NBCCC staff member can then take appropriate measures to address these issues without breaking confidentiality, subject to the volunteer's or employee's agreement. This may include discussion with an appropriate other person, and placing a record of this into the volunteer's or employee's personal file.

Phone calls and letters

Any mail sent to a staff member and marked Private and/or Confidential will not be opened by another member of staff. This applies particularly to Police Check correspondence which may not be opened by anyone other than the addressee or the NBCCC staff member.

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

The working of this policy will be monitored regularly, with a record of the number and nature of formal complaints being held by the NBCCC staff member for monitoring purposes. A review of this policy will take place within a year of its adoption to ensure its effective operation.

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