



New Mills & District Volunteer Centre

Confidentiality Policy

This policy is intended to protect the interests of users, potential users and their carers, staff, trustees and voluntary workers. The need to ensure the right to privacy is essential so that the service user has trust and confidence in the organisation. There is an expectation that the privacy of users will be treated with respect and dignity. This principle also complies to any information about the internal affairs of the organisation. The need to comply with legislative requirements such as the Data Protection Act 1994 and other contractual obligations are also an important aspect of this policy.

1. Service users

- a) Any user of the organisation's services has the right to expect that information given will be used for the purpose for which it was given and should not be released to anyone else either inside or outside the organisation, without their consent.
- b) Information relating to an individual will not be given to a third party without the individual's consent or the consent of their responsible representative.
- c) There may be exceptional situations where it would be appropriate to breach confidentiality or divulge information. Such circumstances could include:
 - i. Where an individual could be placed at risk of physical danger or where withholding information could cause harm or injury to the individual.
 - ii. Where there is a legal requirement to divulge information.

In such circumstances, the matter should be discussed with the Centre Manager or the Chair in the first instance.

2. Information relating to the organisation

- a) Information regarding the internal operation of NMVC should be generally treated as confidential. This would include: -
 - i. Financial reports and contracts details.
 - ii. Staff and volunteer personal records and their families.
 - iii. Information relating to disciplinary or grievance procedures.
- b) Incoming post marked "Personal" or "Private and Confidential" will be treated as such and will be passed on to the addressee unopened.
- c) The provisions of the Data Protection Act will be observed for information held on computer.
- d) Confidential interviews should take place in a private interview/meeting room.

3. Committee

Committee minutes are public documents save for matters concerning individual members of staff. Trustees are reminded that all personal matters must be minuted and distributed separately from the general minutes of meetings.

4. Implementation

- a. Users will be informed of the confidentiality policy and their right to complain if information appears to have been divulged without their consent.
- b. Trustees, staff and volunteers will be made aware of the confidentiality policy and its application to all issues concerning the services and internal affairs of the organisation. This will be covered during recruitment and induction training. A clause in respect of breach on confidentiality is in all contracts of employment and application forms.
- c. In exceptional situations (see 1 (c) above) the member of staff concerned **must** consult their senior manager.
- d. Unauthorised breach on confidentiality will be considered as a serious case of misconduct and in relation to staff could lead to disciplinary action.
- e. Nothing in this policy overrides the right of the Chair (or their nominee) or the Centre Manager to access all incoming and outgoing communications. This right will be exercised only in exceptional circumstances.

(Reviewed February 2007)
(Reviewed 12th May 2008)

Norman H Heald
Company Secretary
12th May 2008