

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Updated: September 2019

Youth Management team, youth workers and volunteers should be aware of the legal responsibilities of information sharing and confidentiality, as well as the implications of breaking confidentiality. All youth workers should be familiar with the data protection act, as well as relevant resources and youth services in place. This policy should be used in conjunction with the appropriate risk assessments, procedures, and policy statements, for example, in relation to the Sexual Health Policy.

Recording Information

Young people should be made aware of the confidentiality policy, and give knowing consent to youth workers when any information is recorded. Parents may also need to be consulted for information, for any health concerns or clarification. The type of information recorded may include any of the following –

- Registration forms – basic information including name, age, and location
- Photographic consent – (must be signed by a parent if the young person is over 18) with clear indication as to where photographs, video or voice recordings will be used or displayed. Parents and young people have the right to refuse photographic consent, or ask the provision to inform them of any images or recorded information that may be used publicly.
- Access to sexual health services (condom distribution)
- Disclosure of any personal issues, problems or health concerns
- Case studies and reporting – May be shared in external parties such as council members, or for publicity
- Written warnings and incident documentation – Any inappropriate behaviour might be recorded for future reference and as a record of incidents

Each young person has the right to ask for access to any documentation recorded that references them. This includes hard copies kept in filing cabinets and electronic copies on the office computers (Data Protection Act). In this instance, care should be taken to ensure that the young person is not able to access the information of any other young person accessing the provision, without the individual's permission. Not all information recorded by the provision is classed as sensitive, however all forms and information kept about young people accessing the centre is stored in a locked cabinet in a secure location. This is not only for confidentiality, but for good

practise and organisation of important information. Information classed as sensitive includes –

The Data Protection Act 1998 defines sensitive personal data as that which contains information about:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions
- Religious or other belief systems
- Trade union membership
- Physical or mental health or conditions
- Details about an individual's sexual life
- Commission or alleged commission of any offence
- Any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged, any proceedings or sentence of any court

Only HWYCA staff with appropriate DBS checks should have access to the information in the cabinet. It is important that information is updated regularly to ensure that the information recorded is correct. If a young person leaves the provision, any relevant information recorded about the individual should be destroyed or filed into the archive for a short period of time.

If a member of staff is computerising information about a young person, the information should be recorded under password protection. The password should only be shared amongst youth staff members, and must be updated regularly. When computerising information, staff members should take great care that the information is not readable to other young people or members of the public in the centre. Typing information with references to young people should be done in a private space, ideally when young people or members of the public are not occupying the space. (Data Protection Act)

Parental / Carer Consent and Involvement

Parents do not need to be involved in the services or information offered as part of our provision. However, we actively encourage young people to discuss the provision with their parent(s) or guardians, and if appropriate for the young person parents and carers are occasionally invited to visit the centre and build a relationship with youth workers. Young people have the same rights as adults, and are not obliged to inform their parents that they are attending any of the services offered at Oaken Grove. For example, youth workers are not required to inform parents and carers that sexual health and substance awareness programmes are being explored as part of the ongoing youth work; however, it is recommended that they do so.

Confidentiality and Disclosing Information

For information regarding confidentiality and sexual health or substance misuse, refer to the appropriate policy statements.

Our youth provision is a safe environment for young people, and staff members are expected to honour each young person's right to confidentiality. On occasion, youth workers may be required to break confidentiality, under circumstances that put the young person or another young person in danger or at risk. Youth workers should break confidentiality under any of the following conditions –

- Where there is a statutory duty to share
- Where a child is believed to be at risk (to themselves or others)
- When there is evidence of serious risk to an individual
- For the prevention, detection or prosecution of serious crime
- When instructed by a court (Data Protection Act)

Sharing information with other organisations or Youth Services

On occasion, youth workers may need to share information with other organisations. This information may be due to a disclosure made by a young person, or a youth worker may suspect that the young person is in danger.

If a youth worker intends to break confidentiality, the information should be shared with the Youth Manager in the first instance. Depending on the situation, this information may be shared with outside Youth Services. For further information regarding sharing information with outside organisations for the welfare of a young person, refer to the Child Protection Policy. The Youth Worker will let the young person know they will be sharing the disclosed information.