

CARIS ISLINGTON CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

CARIS Islington recognises that any client* has the right to expect that any information imparted by that person to CARIS Islington will be used only for the purpose for which it is given and should not be released to anyone else, outside the organisation, without the client's consent.

The right to privacy is essential to ensure that the client has trust and confidence in the organisation and is treated with respect and dignity.

Further, the principle of confidentiality extends to any information about the internal affairs of CARIS Islington which should equally be adhered to by its Management Committee, staff and volunteers.

**Client means anyone who uses the service directly or indirectly and may be an individual or another organisation.*

Clients

Where information about a client has been gained from a referrer, the client has a right to see this. It is usual to gather all information from the client and not from third parties.

Information will only be collected when it is necessary for a specific purpose, and used only for that purpose.

If information is to be divulged to a third party, consent will be obtained from the client in writing.

It would only be appropriate to breach confidentiality if there were legal requirements, or if a client had expressed strong indications of an imminent intention to harm himself/herself or someone else. In those circumstances the volunteer or worker involved would, so far as possible, confer with their supervisor or one of the paid workers before taking any action. If, on balance, it was felt that a breach of confidentiality (e.g. to contact a GP) was appropriate then we will endeavour to tell the client we plan to breach confidentiality and try to obtain their co-operation and permission.

Clients will be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy and of their right to complain if information is divulged without their permission. There is a clear complaints procedure.

Information Storage

Information/records will be stored securely, observing the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Information must only be accessible to the Co-ordinator, Assistant Co-ordinator and Administrator.

To ensure confidentiality, consideration will be given to the physical environment in which information is exchanged, including face to face discussions, telephone conversation, use of fax or photocopier.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- Be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy in relation to both Service clients and the internal affairs of CARIS Islington.
- Be informed that breach of confidentiality is regarded as gross misconduct under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Be required to sign an agreement stating that they have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy.

Each member of staff is responsible for ensuring confidential storage of information and for ensuring a confidential environment.

The Management Committee will produce guidelines for their staff based on this policy document.

Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee will:

- Be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy and that it covers both clients of the Service and issues concerning the internal affairs of CARIS Islington.
- Be made aware that any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and will sign a document to that effect.
- Be responsible for ensuring training is made available to all staff and volunteers and that provision is made in the budget for such training.
- Ensure the Confidentiality Policy is monitored regularly and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Data Protection Act

The Bereavement Service keeps minimal details of volunteers on Data Processing equipment. These details include the volunteer's name, address and telephone number, and the reference number of the client(s) assigned to him/her. We believe that this Service is exempt from registration under the Data Protection Act provided that our volunteers do not object to such records being kept.

Islington Churches
Bereavement Service
Islington Churches
Cold Weather Shelter

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