

Confidentiality Policy

CARESCO complies fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 which makes it unlawful to disclose sensitive information about individuals without the person's prior permission.

This policy also complies with The Children's Act (2006), The Human Rights Act (2000) Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974), The Policy and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) and The Freedom of Information Act (2000)

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all CARESCO staff, trustees and volunteers. The data covered by the confidentiality policy includes:

- Information about CARESCO (the Charity), eg its plans or finances
- Information about individuals, eg service users, customers, volunteers or staff
- Information about other organisations

This data could be recorded electronically, in paper form or spoken, such as:

- phone conversations
- employment information
- medical / health information
- personal information, eg contact details or financial information
- emails / letters
- documents or contracts
- commercially sensitive information about the charity's activities, finances or planning

This policy aims to:

- Protect the interests of our service users, customers, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders
- Ensure all service users and customers have trust and confidence in the Charity and that their dignity is respected.
- Protect the Charity, its trustees, staff and volunteers.
- Comply with data protection law.

3. Statement

All personal information about staff, volunteers, customers, service users, their carers and families should be treated as confidential. Every individual involved with the organisation has the right to confidentiality and respect at all times.

All information about the activities and business of the Charity and other stakeholders should be treated as confidential

Under no circumstances should staff and volunteers share personal or other confidential information with their own partners, family or friends. Confidential information is held on trust and should not be discussed outside CARESCO or in general conversation, and must not be used for an individual's own purposes. The duty of confidentiality is indefinite and continues after a person's involvement with the charity has finished.

4. Information about individuals

CARESCO is committed to ensuring confidential services to all service users and customers and will seek to ensure that:

4.1 All personal information will be treated as confidential. Information will only be collected that is necessary and relevant to the work in hand. It will be stored securely, accessible only on a need to know basis to those members of staff and volunteers duly authorised. The retention periods of personal information is covered in the retention section of the Data Protection Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4.2 Where necessary, individuals may be asked to sign and date a data consent form. This will authorise the Charity to keep written and/or computerised records of personal details where these will be used beyond providing a service or as part of a contract, such as contacting the person regarding the Charity's work

4.3 Where consent is not given for the Charity to record and store basic information about the service user, it is unlikely that a service will be able to be provided.

4.4 Paper records will be kept in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

4.5 All service users are made aware of their right of access to their records.

4.6 Every effort will be made to ensure the physical environment in which face to face discussions and telephone conversations take place does not compromise user confidentiality.

4.7 Service users will be made aware of their right to complain if they feel confidentiality has been breached.

5. Other Information

In the course of their work with CARESCO, staff, trustees and volunteers may be privy to information about the business and other activities of the Charity or of other organisations or stakeholders which should remain confidential and not be shared with others, including colleagues.

6. Situations in which confidentiality will need to be broken

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to ensure that any concerns arising from situations they observe, allegations (reports from third parties) or disclosures (reports from someone about themselves) relating to potential abuse or where an indictable offence may have been committed, are reported to their line manager even if they are unsure whether the concern is justified. It is not a breach of confidentiality to pass this concern on to an appropriate member of staff.

Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy.

7. Breach of Confidentiality

7.1 Breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with through the Charity’s staff disciplinary procedures and the volunteer problem-solving procedures as appropriate.

7.2 Staff or volunteers should notify any potential breach, or risk of breach, to their line manager or a senior manager without delay; so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation.

8. Glossary

Personal Information: By personal information we mean both:

- (a) The data protection definition which is any information which enables a living person to be identified (eg name, address, phone number, email address, NHS number etc, or Special Categories of Personal Data which requires the individual’s explicit consent for it to be held by the Charity, eg ethnicity, sexual life, political interests, religious beliefs, trade union affiliations etc.

And

- (b) Information, written or verbal, about a service user or customer that relates to their health, circumstances, family or experiences that is either provided to you for context so that you can provide a personalised service and/or information you glean directly as a result of your contact with the service user.

The management board of CARESCO trustees should review this policy at 3 year intervals or as appropriate.

Approved by the CARESCO Trustees

Signed
(Chairman)

Date