



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

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1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

NE Youth recognises that colleagues (employees, volunteers, students, apprentices, Directors & others who work within our organisation) gain information about individuals and organisations during the course of their work or activities. In most cases such information will not be stated as confidential and colleagues may have to exercise common sense and discretion in identifying whether information is expected to be confidential.

This policy aims to give guidance, but if in doubt, seek advice from your Line Manager.

- 1.1 Information received by NE Youth, as part of the services it provides, will be considered to be information for NE Youth to share with colleagues and use to deliver its aims and objectives.
- 1.2 Colleagues should inform groups, organisations or individuals why they are requesting information and explain the purpose of storing and using this information. Colleagues should ask permission to keep and use this information.
- 1.3 Colleagues are able to share information with their Line Manager or appropriate colleague in order to discuss issues and seek advice. Colleagues will not disclose to anyone, other than their Line Manager or appropriate colleague, any information considered sensitive, personal, financial or private without the knowledge or consent of the individual, or an officer, in the case of an organisation.
- 1.4 Colleagues should avoid exchanging personal information or comments (gossip) about individuals with whom they have a professional relationship.
- 1.5 Colleagues should not talk in negative terms or disclose confidential information about the organisation or individuals in social settings.
- 1.6 There may be circumstances where colleagues would want to discuss difficult situations with each other to gain a wider perspective on how

to approach a problem - information should be anonymised wherever possible.

- 1.7 If colleagues receive information from individuals outside NE Youth regarding the conduct of a colleague or group, then this should be dealt with sensitively. The appropriate colleague should tell the individual about the NE Youth Complaint Procedure and advise them accordingly.
- 1.8 Where there is a legal duty on NE Youth to disclose information, the person that is affected will be informed that a disclosure has or will be made, if legally able to do so.

2. WHY INFORMATION IS HELD:

- 2.1 Most information held by NE Youth relates to individuals or service users, members, employees, Directors, volunteers and other organisations.
- 2.2 Information is kept to enable NE Youth colleagues to understand the needs of individuals or service users in order to deliver the most appropriate services and to support the effective planning and management of NE Youth.
- 2.3 Information about users may be kept for the purposes of monitoring work and reporting back to funders.

3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Information is confidential to NE Youth as an organisation and may be passed to colleagues, Line Managers or Directors to ensure the best quality service for users when it is appropriate to do so.
- 3.2 Where information is sensitive, i.e. it involves personal information, disputes or legal issues; it will be confidential and dealt with by the appropriate NE Youth Policy. Such information should be clearly

labelled 'Confidential' and should state the names of the colleagues entitled to access the information.

- 3.3 Colleagues will not withhold information from their Line Manager unless it is purely personal to them and not business related or of a nature that may have a negative impact on the organisation.
- 3.4 Users may see NE Youth records which relate to them or their organisation. All requests should be made in line with the NE Youth Data Protection Policy.
- 3.5 Sensitive information as outlined in point 3.2 will only be made available to the person, their designated adviser or professional representative, or the organisation named on the file.
- 3.6 Employees may see their personnel records by giving 14 days' notice in writing to the Chief Executive.
- 3.7 When handling confidential documents, colleagues must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to avoid such documents being seen by people in passing. This also applies to information on computer screens.

4. STORING INFORMATION:

- 4.1 General, non-confidential information about organisations is kept in unlocked filing cabinets/cupboards that are available to all NE Youth colleagues.
- 4.2 Confidential information about volunteers, interns and other individuals will be kept in locked filing cabinets by the colleague directly responsible. Colleagues must ensure Line Managers know how to gain access.
- 4.3 Employees' personnel information will be kept in locked filing cabinets and will be accessible to the Chief Executive/Line Managers.

- 4.4 Files or filing cabinet drawers bearing confidential information should be labelled 'confidential'.
- 4.5 In an emergency situation, the Chief Executive may authorise access to files by other people.
- 4.6 Ensure confidential documentation or personal data is shredded before putting in the recycling bins.

5. DUTY TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION:

- 5.1 NE Youth has a legal duty to disclose some information including:
 - 5.1.1 Suspected (appropriate) safeguarding issues will be reported to Children's Services / Social Services Department.
 - 5.1.2 Suspected drug trafficking, money laundering, acts of terrorism or other illegal activities will be disclosed to the Police.
- 5.2 If colleagues reasonably believe an illegal act has taken place, they must report this to the Chief Executive, or Chair if the Chief Executive is implicated, who will report it to the appropriate authorities if required.

6. DBS INFORMATION:

- 6.1 NE Youth complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information.
- 6.2 NE Youth will request pre-employment Disclosure and Barring Service checks for new employees, Directors and volunteers whose posts involve contact with children or vulnerable adults, as specified by the Disclosure Guidance.

- 6.3 NE Youth will clearly state the need for, and level of, Disclosure on recruitment adverts, in line with NE Youth's Safer Recruitment Policy.
- 6.4 Disclosure information is always kept separately from any other personal or personnel records in secure storage with access limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. It is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

7. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION:

- 7.1 NE Youth will ensure that it complies with all aspects of the General Data Protection Regulation. Please refer to NE Youth Data Protection Policy for detailed information on how we will do this.

8. BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

- 8.1 Colleagues who are dissatisfied with the conduct or actions of other colleagues or NE Youth, which they consider to be a breach of confidentiality, should raise this with their Line Manager using the NE Youth Grievance Procedure if necessary, and not discuss their dissatisfaction outside NE Youth.
- 8.2 Colleagues accessing unauthorised files or breaching confidentiality may face disciplinary action and/or legal action. Ex-employees breaching confidentiality may face legal action.