



Survivors'  
Network

Survivors' Network Confidentiality Policy

Key Contact: CEO

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## Survivors' Network Confidentiality Policy

### 1. Scope and values

Survivors' Network provides services to clients who need the protection of a strong confidentiality policy in order to allow every service user to build trust with the organisation. Survivors' Network acknowledges the courage and confidence it takes to make any disclosure of personal information and therefore that this information must be treated with the respect and confidentiality it deserves.

In addition to information about clients, confidentiality also applies to information about staff and volunteers, and in some cases to information about the organisation itself.

The underlying principle of confidentiality is that information should only be shared on a strict 'need to know' basis. This applies to sharing information with colleagues within the organisation as well as to sharing information with external people and organisations.

Confidentiality applies to information that has been heard or seen, as well as to information in writing, and to information acquired accidentally as well as that given deliberately.

When a volunteer, trustee or staff member leaves the organisation she remains bound by this confidentiality agreement.

Even where the disclosure of personal information is unlikely to pose a risk, all individuals with whom Survivors' Network comes into contact should have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

This policy is in line with Survivors' Network's Child Protection Policy, Vulnerable Adult Policy, Data Protection Policy, Pre-trial Therapy Policy, Guidance for Supporting Suicidal Clients and information sharing agreements.

## 2. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for implementation of this policy is delegated by the Board of Trustees to the Chief Executive Officer.

Service managers are responsible for (a) ensuring that procedures within their remit are consistent with this policy and (b) monitoring compliance with relevant policies and procedures.

All members of staff, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors are required to comply with this policy and its related procedures where applicable. Breaking confidentiality is potentially gross misconduct and grounds for instant dismissal.

Survivors' Network undertakes to provide appropriate guidance and training, including regular refresher training, to all members of staff and others who handle confidential information.

## 3. Good practice

All information about Survivors' Network, its service users, its practices, and any financial or professional information must be assumed to be confidential until told otherwise, and must not be discussed outside of the reporting procedure within the organisation.

Absolute confidentiality regarding service users, however, cannot be guaranteed and this will be made clear to all service users at the earliest possible opportunity. There are particular limitations to the service that clients can be offered if they are pre-trial or contemplating criminal proceedings against their abuser.

The following general principals apply:

- Other than in exceptional cases as set out below, no information about a service user will be given to a third party, including their families and professionals involved in their care, without their express permission.
- No information about the organisation, including financial information and personnel issues, will be disclosed to an external organisation or individual except with the prior permission of the Management Committee or CEO.
- No information about colleagues – staff or volunteers – will be disclosed without their consent other than where necessary for legitimate business purposes.

## 4. Data sharing and disclosure

It may be necessary to share information where there is a serious risk of harm to a particular person or persons or to the safety and well-being of the organisation. The situations in which a disclosure of otherwise confidential information may be necessary include:

- Passing on information on terrorist activity to the police
- Giving evidence in court if a subpoena is issued

- Child/Adult protection and safeguarding

Procedures for clients who are expressing suicidal intention are set out in the Guidance for supporting suicidal clients.

Disclosing information on a “need to know” basis will take into account:

- The nature and extent of the information involved
- The purpose of disclosing such information
- Whether the disclosure of information is an appropriate response in the context of safeguarding the welfare of the individual to whom it may relate, the welfare of other individuals or the organisation.

## **5. Policy statements for clients and others**

Survivors’ Network will maintain up to date policy statements on confidentiality and privacy as follows:

- A statement and privacy notice for new clients, setting out the confidentiality policy and circumstances in which confidential information may be disclosed. (See Confidentiality Statements)
- A statement and privacy notice for each service (See Confidentiality Statements)

Survivors’ Network will ensure that the appropriate statement(s) are made available at the earliest reasonable opportunity to new clients or contacts.

Current statements and guidance related to confidentiality and privacy may be found in the appendices to this policy.