

CONFIDENTIALITY

Those who are involved in social care will very often be given information about those they care for, colleagues, or their employers. This information can be obtained through formal written systems such as written reports, or through conversations.

However the information is gained, it is given on trust – this means that the information must be kept confidential and not passed on to other people without authorisation.

It is important not to destroy this trust.

ABOUT PEOPLE WHO USE SERVICES

Staff may work very closely with those for whom they provide care and support and probably speak more regularly with them than anyone else.

It can be natural for clients to turn to the carers' to discuss personal information, which can place staff in an awkward situation. This can also be the case if carers' speak to clients about personal issues.

Some information may not be spoken, rather the carer may learn a lot about services user's behaviour and medical complaints by working with them. Clients may wish for this information to be kept private, both from other service users and from other care workers who are not closely involved with them.

Clients may say to carer's that they "wish to speak in confidence". It is important to remind the client that should there be a situation of risk, the care worker will have to share the information with line management. If significant information is not passed on to a senior member of staff, there may be several risks:

- The care worker may find themselves compromised.
- There may be a failure to meet the clients needs because others are unable to take the necessary action
- The client may be at risk as secrets may lead to an inappropriate relationship
- Other people may be at risk because the information was not shared.

ABOUT COLLEAGUES

Care workers tend to work closely as a team, and may often pick up confidential and personal information about each other.

It is important for the quality of the teamwork and the atmosphere between staff that respect is given to each others' rights to confidentiality.

The same rules that apply to clients are also to be applied to colleagues.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

In the course of work, staff may become aware of confidential information. Some of this information may relate to other members of staff or clients and some may be of value to competitors. None of this information should be passed on to other people; exceptions being where not passing the information on may put someone at risk.

SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Avoid passing on confidential information during informal conversations
- Do not remove files or records from the offices where they are kept
- Write up records in a way that keeps all clients confidential from each other
- Never promise to keep a secret (remember, it may put someone at risk)
- Ask clients if you may share information.

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Candlelight Good Practice Guide to: **Confidentiality**

