

## Confidentiality policy

Individuals have a right to expect that all personal information held about them by Nacoa will be treated as confidential.

Confidentiality is respected for all:

- service users (callers), including family, friends and significant others
  - those requesting services (callers), and
  - other third parties to whom reference is made
1. Nacoa offers a confidential information, listening and support service to children, young people and adults through the helpline. All personal information is kept confidential and, other than in exceptional circumstances, is only disclosed to other agencies and individuals with the consent of the caller.
    - 1.1. Information is treated as confidential unless the caller has given permission to disclose.
    - 1.2. Where permission to disclose has been sought from the subject, it is:
      - for a specific purpose of which the caller is aware; and
      - not for blanket disclosure.
    - 1.3. Any information from any source, which gives rise to concern for the caller's safety or well being, directly or indirectly, should be made known to the helpline supervisor who will make contact with the Chief executive and/or the named trustee.

It is a statutory obligation to report cases of physical and sexual abuse reported by minors (under the age of sixteen) and vulnerable adults. All concerns must be related helpline supervision, the Chief executive or named trustee who will consider the course of action.

Likewise, if there are grounds for believing the subject is no longer able to take responsibility for his/her own actions, all cases must be reported to the helpline supervisor who will make contact with the Chief Executive.

Information is only disclosed without the permission of the caller for those reasons set out in DOH Local Authority Circular LAC(88) 17 'Personal Social Services: Confidentiality of Personal Information', paragraphs 16 to 31 (copy available).

In such a situation (i.e. where someone is perceived to be at risk and is withholding permission for Nacoa to take action and we have identifying information) the employee or volunteer must undertake the following action before confidentiality is broken:

- Confer with the helpline supervisor who will contact the Chief executive and/or named trustee.
  - (if possible and appropriate) share with the caller the action that Nacoa intends to take.
2. Information about a caller is disclosed, subject to the protection of the identity of any third party.

Information that may reveal the identity of a third party is withheld when access to personal records is granted, unless permission to disclose has been obtained



3. Information about a third party is only disclosed with his/her consent to any other individual seeking help.
4. Case notes, case histories and other confidential material Confidentiality/Security

The strictest precautions must be taken at all times to ensure that Nacoa's records, files, mailing lists and other confidential material are not accessible to anyone who is not authorised to see them. Fax transmissions of confidential material should only be undertaken when the named recipient is present at the receiving end of the fax to avoid interception.

All case notes, files and other confidential material must

- not be left unattended in offices or cars, and
- be kept securely when offices are closed.

Case histories presented for publicity or outreach purposes must be vetted by the Chief executive or named trustee prior to presentation.

Confidentiality resides with Nacoa as an Agency, rather than individual employee or volunteer.

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Signed

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Date

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Full name (in capitals, please)

