



Confidentiality Policy

Mayfield & Five Ashes Community Services (MAYFACS)

Introduction

MAYFACS employees and volunteers could be party to personal details and information regarding individuals and organisations that they deal with as part of their work. Our general principle is to reassure users of our services that they are not being judged and that information given will remain confidential and will not be passed to a third party without their permission. Without this assurance some aspects of our work, for example with vulnerable adults, might prove less effective and result in withdrawal from the MAYFACS services.

In some cases, however, there may be areas where judgement must be used in deciding how far to take confidentiality and these guidelines have been prepared to assist staff and volunteers finding themselves in such situations. In all cases where doubt exists as to the best course of action, volunteers should seek advice of MAYFACS employees or trustees.

MAYFACS employees will ensure that confidentiality issues are identified as part of the risk assessment process for new projects.

Examples of disclosure of serious crime

1. In the unlikely event that a service user discloses that they have committed or are about to commit a crime, whilst being aware of a crime is not assisting them, staff and volunteers should be careful not to give any advice or encouragement which could be seen as aiding or abetting an offence.
2. Crimes could include a range of offences including substance abuse, illegal immigration status, benefit fraud, in addition to crimes against the person or property.
3. In the case of terrorist activity, it is an offence to fail to give information which may help to prevent acts of terrorism or apprehend a terrorist. It is also unlawful to withhold information or suspicions concerning money laundering activities resulting from drug trafficking or terrorism. In these cases, information must be passed to the police without exception, with or without the service user's consent. Staff and volunteers should not put themselves or anyone else at risk by seeking to obtain consent where this could prove dangerous.
4. Cases of serious crime including abuse of children or other vulnerable groups. These would include risk of harm to a vulnerable adult, child or young person or their siblings, risk of self-harm by a vulnerable child, young person or adult or there is disclosure of or intention to murder, rape or cause potentially life-threatening harm.

Other crime

In general MAYFACS seeks to protect the confidentiality of service users and build good relationships with them. We do not give advice on legal, financial or benefit matters to individuals, and the main focus of our work is direct or indirect support to people who live in the parish of Mayfield & Five Ashes. This means that staff and volunteers do not normally get involved in situations where crimes or illegal status may be disclosed but if you have concerns about information that a service user is giving you, the best course of action to take is as follows:

- tell them that what they are telling you / or are about to tell you could indicate or mean that the law has been, or is about to be broken
- warn them not to give you any further information and to seek the advice of a lawyer
- that you could be summonsed as a witness where you would be obliged by law to breach confidentiality.
- if appropriate, suggest other possible organisations that could help
- should immediately (or as soon as practically possible) contact the MAYFACS Manager, and failing being able to make contact, then the Chair, or failing to make contact, a member of board of trustees
- If in any doubt as to whether there is an issue to make contact as above

POLICY No.

03

DATE POLICY REVIEWED/REVISED: May 2021

DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW: May 2024

TRUSTEE SIGNATURE: Signed on hard copy

TRUSTEE NAME (Print): L.Firrell (Chair)