

Confidentiality Policy

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Introduction

Veterans Relief and Support is committed to providing a confidential service. No information given to the charity will be shared with any other organisation or individual without the user's expressed permission.

For the purpose of this policy, confidentiality relates to the transmission of personal, sensitive or identifiable information about individuals or Veterans Relief and Support work which comes into the possession of the charity through its work.

Veterans Relief and Support holds personal data about its staff, supporters, members and volunteers which will only be used for the purposes for which it was gathered and will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the charity without prior permission.

All personal data will be dealt with sensitively and in the strictest confidence internally and externally.

Purpose

The purpose of the confidentiality policy is to ensure that all staff, members, volunteers and users understand the charity's requirements in relation to the disclosure of personal data and confidential information.

Principles

- All personal paper-based and electronic data must be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and must be secured against unauthorised access, accidental disclosure, loss or destruction.
- All personal paper-based and electronic data must only be accessible to those individuals authorised to have access.

Records

All paper records are kept in locked filing cabinets. All information relating to staff, supporters, members and volunteers will be left in locked drawers. This includes notebooks, copies of correspondence and any other sources of information.

Breaches of confidentiality

Veterans Relief and Support recognises that occasions may arise where individuals feel they need to breach confidentiality. Confidential or sensitive information relating to an individual may be divulged where there is risk of danger to the individual, a volunteer or employee, or the public at large, or where it is against the law to withhold it. In these circumstances, information may be divulged to external agencies e.g. police or social services on a need to know basis.

Where a volunteer feels confidentiality should be breached the following steps will be taken:

1. The volunteer should raise the matter immediately with their main contact at Veterans Relief and Support.

2. The volunteer must discuss with their main contact the issues involved in the case and explain why they feel confidentiality should be breached and what would be achieved by breaching confidentiality. The main contact should take a written note of this discussion.
3. The main contact is responsible for discussing with the volunteer what options are available in each set of circumstances.
4. The main contact is responsible for making a decision on whether confidentiality should be breached. If the main contact decides that confidentiality is to be breached then they should take the following steps:
5. The main contact should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The main contact should brief the DSL on the full facts of the case, ensuring they do not breach confidentiality in doing so. The main contact should seek authorisation to breach confidentiality from the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
6. If the DSO agrees to breach confidentiality, a full written report on the case should be made and any action agreed undertaken. The main contact is responsible for ensuring all activities are actioned.
7. If the DSO does not agree to breach confidentiality then this is the final decision of Veterans Relief and Support.

Legislative Framework

Veterans Relief and Support will monitor this policy to ensure it meets statutory and legal requirements including the Data Protection Act, Children's Act, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and Prevention of Terrorism Act. Training on the policy will include these aspects.

Ensuring the Effectiveness of the Policy

All volunteers will have access to a copy of the confidentiality policy. Existing and new volunteers will be introduced to the confidentiality policy via Veterans Relief and Support induction. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Non-adherence

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Grievance and/or Disciplinary procedures as appropriate.