



Confidentiality Policy

During your time with ACTS FAST you are likely to have access to information of a confidential nature to carry out your role. We all have a responsibility to ensure we offer a non-judgemental and confidential service, whereby clients feel they can trust us with access to sensitive information. This means that we need to ensure we handle their information in confidential and secure manner. This policy outlines our confidentiality practices, in addition to our data protection and privacy policies.

Strict confidentiality about individual clients, staff and volunteers are explained in this policy.

Confidential information is defined as:

- Phone conversations
- Employment information
- Medical/health information
- Personal financial information
- Emails/letters
- Documents or contracts
- Commercially sensitive information about the charity's activities, finances, or planning

Confidentiality is about keeping someone's private details private, but with an understanding that there will sometimes be a genuine and legal necessity to share information. This is usually to fulfil a legal obligation, in connection with a persons support or for someone's safety.

Policy and practice relating to service users and clients

ACTS FAST complies fully with the Data Protection Act 2018, which is the UK's interpretation of the EU GDPR regulations (General Data Protection Regulations). The Data Protection Act 2018 makes it unlawful to disclose sensitive information about individuals without the person's prior permission. Information shared between workers and service users is confidential and should not be shared with any third party outside of the organisation without written authorisation. It is recognised however, that relevant matters concerning service users will be discussed internally with other workers in a confidential manner. Discussions should only be conducted on a 'need to know' basis, and client's details and anonymity will always be maintained. The goal is always to uphold high levels of client care alongside ensuring legal obligations are met.

Various written records of clients will be kept including brief notes on telephone communication, brief notes from support sessions, personal details such as contact details and a contact log will usually be kept and must not be disclosed to any party without legal and proper reason. Most client's files are to be stored securely on the charities nominated CRM system ("Cliniko") which requires secure passwords and two-factor authentication. You must ensure you are familiar with these security protocols and refer to the data protection policy or line manager for further guidance.



Confidentiality is between the client and the charity, not between the client and the individual team member. This relationship should always be maintained for the benefit of clients and professionals so that professional boundaries are in place help protect everyone and offer the best levels of care. This helps avoid “trauma bonds” being created between a client and professional.

Breaching Confidentiality – When? Who? How? Why?

There are some instances where confidentiality is breached without proper reason (illegal and immoral) and other circumstances where it is necessary to breach a confidence (legally defensible) in order to protect someone, prevent a serious crime or act in the client’s best interest.

In the instance of a disclosure of potential/ongoing abuse involving a child/vulnerable adult, risk of harm to self or others, we may be required to pass this information on to a third party (such as police, social workers/MASH). In this scenario ACTS FAST will always encourage and support the client to be able to do this themselves, however if this doesn’t happen in an agreed way, we would have to act, liaising with our DSL or relevant clinical supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity.

This sort of disclosure or information sharing will usually be discussed in the first instance with clients in a non-judgemental, respectful way by explaining the need and reason to disclose this information to the third party. Before future support is carried out a review will take place to ensure that the charities support of the clients remains relevant, helpful, and appropriate.

There are however some occasions where we are legally required to breach confidentiality straight away, these include information regarding:

- Any breach of the Children’s Act 2004
- Threat of harm to self or others
- Drug trafficking
- Money laundering
- Any act of terrorism

Any circumstances where confidentiality may be breached must be taken to supervision at the earliest possible time and discussed with the DSL, including any exceptional circumstances which may lead to legal proceedings or involve clients court proceedings.

Your duty of confidentiality is indefinite and continues after your involvement with the charity has finished. Please ensure you fully understand this legal requirement, as you have a personal responsibility for how you handle this information.



Responsibilities of team members

We all have a responsibility to ensure that we keep everyone's information confidential and handle it in a legal and secure way. A good approach when thinking about how you handle this information is to keep it on a "need to know" basis and handle it as if it was information about yourself.

- You must only store client information on charity devices and usually only in electronic format, provided by two-factor password protection and by encrypted means. This helps keep data secure and confidential. Further guidance is available in the data protection policy.
- During training/induction you will be informed of what information can and cannot be accessed and provided guidance on how to handle that information. A copy of the data protection policy is available, please ensure you understand its contents.
- Everyone is expected to help keep information confidential and secure. We all have a legal and personal responsibility to handle and store confidential information in a secure way.
- We are all responsible for ensuring we raise any concerns or questions regarding how data is being handled should we feel something has gone wrong. Please raise this with your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

It is very important that you follow the practices and principles of this confidentiality policy in tandem with the ACTS FAST Data Protection Policy. All staff and volunteers are expected to handle information in a confidential manner, and should you have any question please raise this with your line manager.

Please note that failure to comply with this policy is a serious offence and the charity may suspend/conclude any agreements (employed or voluntary) should an offence come to the attention of the charities management board.

Policy updated: May 2022