

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy

Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church requires that an individual (paid employee or volunteer) acting on our behalf fully understands and supports the need for confidentiality during their time with us. Also that, once they leave, they continue to maintain this confidentiality with regard to any information acquired during that time.

Every individual connected with or acting on behalf of Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church must take personal responsibility for not breaching confidentiality and as part of their contract of employment or in the case of volunteers, their registration documentation will be signing a confidentiality statement to that effect.

This document defines confidential information as it applies to individuals and groups we work with and describes the procedures that should be followed to ensure such information remains confidential.

What is confidential information?

Confidential information is information about individuals and groups, their ideas or plans, through which they can be identified. Confidential information may be written, spoken or electronic and may include: telephone or face to face conversations, employment information, medical/health information, personal references, personal financial information, emails.

Personal confidential information

Personal information about individuals working or volunteering within Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church is confidential to the individual and is held on trust by Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church. It should not be discussed outside Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church or in general conversation, and must not be used by individuals associated with Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church for their own purposes. Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church complies fully with the Data Protection Act 1998 which makes it unlawful to disclose sensitive information about individuals associated with Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church.

It is necessary that written or electronic records are kept of the work we do. This may entail recording confidential information. This should always be written in a factual, non-judgemental way. Only essential information should be recorded. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, an individual is entitled to read information kept about them. Should an employee/volunteer wish to see their personal records they must complete a Data Subject

Request Form and this copies be found in Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church Data Protection Policy

Client's confidential information

Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church holds what must be regarded as confidential information about its clients, service users and/or members. Information of this nature will be handled as if it were personal information and all the guidelines above are to be applied.

In addition to these, every individual connected with or acting on behalf of Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church must ensure they do not contribute to external discussions or speculation about any client, service user or member, (whether or not that individual is being actively supported by Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church) where that discussion is likely to be of a critical or defamatory nature.

While not, strictly speaking, of a confidential nature, every individual connected with or acting on behalf of Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church must ensure they do not contribute to external speculation about any statutory or private agency where that discussion is likely to be of a critical or defamatory nature.

Sharing of confidential information within Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church

Confidential information may be shared with colleagues at Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church where it is necessary to do this to ensure they can undertake their work fully. If there is any doubt about this, their Line Manager should be consulted in the first instance.

Storage of confidential information

Written records should be filed immediately they have been written and should not be left on desks or around the office where they might be seen or lost.

Electronic records should be kept in an orderly way and clearly identified. Confidential information stored on disk or CD or other such format should be similarly stored.

It should be noted that Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church IT policy on the acceptable use of computers includes, in the list of unacceptable uses:

- The creation or transmission of defamatory material
- Violating the privacy of other users

Financial records must be kept for an indefinite period or at the discretion of the Finance Officer.

Disposal of confidential information

When written information of a confidential nature is being disposed of, it must be either shredded or burnt. CDs must also be shredded. Shredders are located in the main office.

Electronically stored information must be deleted in accordance with Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church IT policy.

Disciplinary Action

Anyone not adhering to Dudley Counselling Centre/Dudley Community Church Confidentiality Policy may be subject to the Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy and Procedures.

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