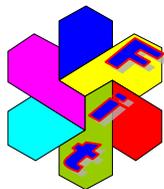


Independent Resource Centre



FULL INCLUSION TEAM

Confidentiality

Policy and Procedure

Confidentiality Statement

- ✚ The Independent Resource Centre offers a confidential service. Nothing you tell us will be shared with any other organization or individual without your express permission.
- ✚ The Independent Resource Centre aims to provide service of a standard acceptable to all our users.
- ✚ If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also avoid it happening again.
- ✚ Our complaints procedure sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received from us. Ask the receptionist for a leaflet. If you would rather talk to someone about the complaints procedure please ask the receptionist/advisor who sees you.

Confidentiality Statement

The Independent Resource Centre is committed to providing a confidential advice service to its users. The Centre believes that the principles of confidentiality must be integrated across all aspects of services and management. The Centre believes its users deserve the right to confidentiality to protect their interests and safeguard its services. The following will be displayed in the waiting areas/interview room:

“The Independent Resource Centre offers a confidential service – nothing you tell us will be shared with any other organisation or individual without your express permission”.

Definition of Confidentiality

The Independent Resource Centre understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a service user shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party which is external to the Staff and Co-ordinator, without that service user’s prior expressed consent to disclose such information.

The Independent Resource Centre recognises that all users should be able to access the Centre’s services in confidence and that no other person should ever know that they have used the Centre’s services.

The Independent Resource Centre recognises that information may be indirectly given out through staff informally discussing cases. All staff should ensure that no discussions relating to an individual user of the Centre can take place outside of the Centre's premises. The Management Committee will not receive details of individual users or their case.

The Centre recognises that users need to feel secure in using its services in a confidential manner. The Centre will ensure all user/members are afforded confidential interview space and will ensure blinds, radios and other mechanisms are used to ensure no breach of confidentiality can occur inadvertently.

The Centre will not confirm the User/Member's presence in the Centre or use of the Centre without obtaining the User/Members consent.

Statistical Recording

The Independent Resource Centre is committed to effective statistical recording of service users to enable it to monitor take-up of service and to identify any policy issues arising from advice services.

It is the Co-ordinator's responsibility to ensure all statistical records given to third parties, such as to support funding applications, monitoring reports for the local authority shall be produced in anonymous form, so individuals cannot be recognised.

Case Records

It is the Co-ordinator's responsibility to ensure all case records are kept in locked filing cabinets. All case records must be locked away at the end of each working day. All information relating to service users will be left in locked drawers. This includes note books, copies of correspondence, calculation sheets and any other source of information.

Expressed Consent to Give Information

IT is the responsibility of staff and volunteer advisors to ensure that where any action is agreed to be taken by the Independent Resource Centre on behalf of a client, that client must firstly sign an authorisation form. This should be placed in the client's file.

Centre staff and volunteer advisors are responsible for checking with clients if it is acceptable to call them at home or work in relation to their case. All staff and volunteer advisors must ensure that they make no reference to the Centre when making telephone contact with clients.

Centre staff and volunteer advisors are responsible for checking with clients that it is acceptable to write to them at home or work in relation to their case.

All details of expressed consent must be recorded in the case file.

Breaches of Confidentiality

The Independent Resource Centre recognizes that occasions may arise where individual workers feel they need to breach confidentiality. The Independent Resource Centre recognises, however, that any breach of confidentiality may damage the reputation of the Independent Resource Centre's services and therefore has to be treated with the most serious of approaches.

On occasions where a worker feels confidentiality should be breached the following steps must be taken:

1. The worker should raise the matter immediately with the Co-ordinator.
2. The worker must discuss with the Co-ordinator the issues involved in the case and explain why they feel confidentiality should be breached and what would be achieved by breaching confidentiality. The Co-ordinator should take a written note of this discussion.
3. The Co-ordinator is responsible for discussing with the worker what options are available in each set of circumstances.
4. The Co-ordinator is responsible for making a decision on whether confidentiality should be breached. If the Co-ordinator decides that confidentiality is to be breached then they should take the following steps
5. The Co-ordinator should contact the Chair in the first instance, or Vice Chair of the Management

Committee. The Co-ordinator should brief the Chair/Vice Chair on the full facts of the case, ensuring they do not breach confidentiality in doing so. The Co-ordinator should seek authorisation to breach confidentiality from the Chair/Vice Chair.

6. If the Chair/Vice Chair agrees to breaching confidentiality, a full written report on the case should be made and any action agreed undertaken. The Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring all activities are auctioned.
7. If the Chair/Vice Chair does not agree to breach confidentiality then this is the final decision of the Independent Resource Centre.
8. Under no circumstances should any breach of confidentiality be discussed at this stage with the Independent Resource Centre's Complaints Officer. This is to ensure that any future complaints of investigations arising from breach in confidentiality can be carried out in an independent manner.

Legislative Framework

The Independent Resource Centre 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 Management Committee members will receive a copy of the confidentiality policy. Existing and new workers will be introduced to the confidentiality policy via induction and training. The policy will be reviewed annually and amendments should be proposed and agreed by the Management Committee.

Independent Resource Centre

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