

Service User Confidentiality Policy



The work of Ascend Adventure will include the provision of information, advice, and therapeutic support to service users. This policy sets out guidelines and boundaries for employees when working with service users. This confidentiality policy is based on the principle that the service user's interests, wishes and rights are of fundamental importance. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Ascend Adventure Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

Worker/Service User Agreement

It is essential in all situations where a service user approaches a worker that the worker first explains the boundaries of the confidentiality he or she is being asked to maintain. The worker must explain that:

- He or she may share the information with his/her line manager if it seems appropriate.
- He/she may inform the police or other statutory body should information be of a serious nature, e.g. violence; robbery; illegal drugs; arson; unlawful sex, or any situation, which endangers the safety of another person or property.

Information Sharing

There are occasions when there is a need to share information about a service user:

- Between employees of Ascend Adventure
- Between Ascend Adventure and another agency

All Ascend Adventure workers are required to adhere to this policy. Information will only be shared within the agency where there is a need to do so, such as a worker seeking support and advice from their line manager or the need to share information within the team in order for different team members to be enabled to support the service user.

Express signed consent must be obtained from the service user when information needs to be shared outside Ascend Adventure. There are exceptions to this (See below).

Information sharing is of positive benefit to the service user as it enables Ascend Adventure to support the individual more effectively.

Record Keeping

In some instances it may be appropriate to keep written records of accounts of one to one contact with service users. All such records should:-

- be factual statements including dates, times and venues;
- avoid giving opinion or judgement where possible;
- be locked away when not in use and accessible only to staff with designated service user responsibility;
- be professionally recorded, as they may have to be disclosed to police or other statutory bodies.

Breaches of Confidentiality

Breaches of service user/worker confidentiality may be considered as professional misconduct and could result in disciplinary action taking place. A breach would include imparting any confidential information to:-

- Another service user.
- A colleague who does not have a professional interest in the matter.

- Any third party who does not have a direct interest in the matter.

Confidentiality Exemptions

There are some issues that all staff must report to the Directors and must not agree to keep confidential. Such issues include:

- The service user having convictions or allegations made of a sexual offence.
- The service user having convictions or allegations made of a serious violent crime.
- An employee having convictions for any offence committed but not declared during their application process.
- Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young person under the age of 18 years is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm (in such cases please refer to the Safeguarding Children Policy).
- When instructed by the courts (including in certain limited circumstances by the police, acting on the authority of the courts) to reveal information.
- When the service user has threatened, or is likely to do serious harm to themselves, a member of staff or another individual

Failure to report these disclosures could jeopardise other service users and/or staff and may result in disciplinary action being taken for non-disclosure.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed on: 17th January 2021

Date of next review: 17th January 2023