



Confidentiality Policy

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the
Data Protection Policy**

1. Introduction

The ME Association (“MEA”) manages and responds to communications from people with ME/CFS, their families, carers, health professionals and interested others.

The MEA is committed to providing a confidential service to its service user. Maintaining confidentiality is an essential part of the service helping to create a safe environment within which a service user feel able to communicate freely.

The MEA, during the course of its work, handles confidential information. It is vital therefore that a worker complies with the confidentiality restrictions set out in this agreement

Definitions:-

“a worker” means any employee, trustee, volunteer or any person or organisation who provides services to the MEA

“service user”-means any person making an inquiry, statement or other communication to or within the MEA

“confidential information”-means information about the service user and the content of their communication whether verbal or written to, within and from the MEA which enables them to be identified

This policy applies to a worker.

1.1 Reasons for this Policy Statement

- To protect the interests of a service user
- To ensure trust and confidence in the MEA.
- To protect the MEA, its trustees, staff, contractors and volunteers.
- To comply with data protection law.

2. Data Protection

The MEA will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and all subsequent amendments and regulations made thereto. A worker must take all necessary steps

to similarly comply and follow the provisions of the Act and in particular the MEA's Policy Statement on data protection and security.

3. Information about individuals

The MEA is committed to ensuring confidential services to all service users and will seek to ensure that all personal information will be treated as confidential. Information will only be collected that is necessary and relevant to the work in hand. It will be stored securely, accessible only on a need to know basis to a worker. The retention periods of personal information is covered in the retention section of the Data Protection Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4. Confidentiality restrictions

Without written consent from the service user, no information about that service user must be disclosed or used outside the MEA service. A worker must set up risk mitigation procedures in place, such as automated reminders and checklists, to ensure that such written consent has been first obtained. In addition:-

- Any statistical information must only be released in anonymous format.
- Confidential information must not be discussed where there is any possibility that persons outside the MEA service may hear or receive details of such discussion.
- Confidential information, either on paper or on screen, must not be left where it can be seen by any person other than a worker
- These restrictions extend after any person leaves the MEA service but does not apply to information which is or comes into the public domain otherwise through unauthorised disclosure

5. Other Information

In the course of their work with the MEA staff, contractors, trustees and volunteers may be privy to information about the business and other activities of the MEA or of other organisations or stakeholders which should remain confidential and not be shared with others, including colleagues.

6. Situations in which confidentiality will need to be broken:-

- Where not to do so would be breaking or supporting the breaking of the law
- Where any information is provided concerning terrorism:
- Where there is a perceived risk to the safety of any person
- Where such information is relevant to the specific requirements of the service user

7. Breach of Confidentiality

7.1 Breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with through the MEA's Grievance, Disciplinary and Complaints Procedures as appropriate.

7.2 A worker must notify any potential breach, or risk of breach, to their line manager or to a trustee without delay; so that steps can be taken to address the situation.

I agree to comply with the provisions of this Confidentiality Policy

Name

Signature.....

Date

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