



Confidentiality Policy

Statement of Intent

Parent Carers Together recognises that colleagues (employees, volunteers, paid parents) gain information about individuals and organisations during the course of their work or activities. In most cases, such information will not be stated as confidential, and colleagues would be expected to exercise common sense and discretion in identifying whether information is expected to be confidential. This policy aims to protect the interests of our members and to ensure that they can have trust and confidence in Parents Carers Together, but if in doubt, seek advice from the Chair.

- Colleagues should avoid exchanging personal information or comments (gossip) about individuals with whom they have a professional relationship.
- It is not appropriate to discuss a person's caring responsibilities without their prior consent.
- Colleagues should avoid talking about organisations or individuals in social settings.
- Colleagues will not disclose to anyone other than the Chair any information considered sensitive, personal, financial, or private without the knowledge and consent of the individual, or, in the case of an organisation, an officer.
- Colleagues must be aware that in the course of the work they undertake as a representative of Parent Carers Together that confidential matters may be discussed. In these situations, only anonymised information may be shared with the forum and only having checked with the meeting chair that this is acceptable.
- The Chair has the complete and final responsibility for all matters relating to confidentiality and any information sharing.

Information is only kept in order for us to gain a better understanding of the needs, services, as well as gaps that exist for children and young people with additional needs in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and for communication purposes.

- Parent Carers Together has the role of representing its members with regard to the issues that Parents and Carers face and we may use collective information about our members to highlight where there may be a gap in services or to highlight an issue.

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- Parent Carers Together will not divulge an individual's names or details and if an individual expressly requests that the details remain confidential, they will do so.
- Collective information about our members may be passed on to known groups or statutory agencies to highlight a need or to provide data – where this is the case, no personal details will be given.
- When photocopying or working on confidential documents, colleagues must ensure they are not seen by people in passing. This also applies to information on computer screens.
- All information is confidential to Parent Carers Together.
- Colleagues who are dissatisfied with the conduct or actions of other colleagues or Parent Carers Together itself should raise these issues with the Chair using the complaints procedure, if necessary, and not discuss their dissatisfaction outside Parent Carers Together.
- Colleagues accessing unauthorised information or breaching confidentiality may face disciplinary action, in line with our Code of Conduct policy.
- Where a member has concerns about the use of Parent Carers Together funds, s/he may refer directly to the Chair, Treasurer or Administrator outside of the usual grievance procedure.

We will consider any breach of this policy, except in certain exceptional circumstances outlined below, as a disciplinary matter.

- ! Abuse will be reported to the Social Services Department (refer separately to the Forum's Safeguarding Policies).**
- ! Drug trafficking, money laundering, acts of terrorism or treason will be disclosed to the police.**
- ! In addition, a colleague believing an illegal act has taken place, or that a user is at risk of harming themselves or others, must report this to the Chair who will report it to the appropriate authorities.**

The decision to break confidentiality rests with the Chair. The Steering Group members will be informed at once of the decision to break confidentiality.

Where possible, we will let the person know that we intend to breach confidentiality.

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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Steering Group and updated as necessary in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, guidance and good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.