

Telford Mind Policy on Confidentiality and Access to Service User Records

In this document 'member of staff ' means paid and unpaid staff.

Telford Mind believes that every service user has a right to privacy. All Telford Mind staff have a duty to keep personal information about service users safe and confidential. Service users need to know that they can trust staff if they are discussing personal or sensitive matters with them. Telford Mind is an organisational member of The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy which states that: 'Practitioners are encouraged to keep appropriate records of their work with clients... All records should be accurate, respectful of clients and colleagues and protected from unauthorised disclosureRespecting client confidentiality is a fundamental requirement for keeping trust.'

Telford Mind believes that the service user has a right to be confident in our handling of confidentiality. This means that Staff must not discuss service users outside of work and must be mindful of whether they can be overheard by others when discussing sensitive or confidential information about service users. However confidentiality does not mean secrecy. Current mental health care generally has a multidisciplinary approach, which usually requires good communication and good information exchange for it to be safe and effective. The organisation's position on confidentiality is, therefore, as follows:

- Telford Mind works hard to support and promote the independence of all service users including the service user's access to and input into his / her records at Telford Mind.
 - It recognises that some service users may be concerned about records being kept and therefore keeps all record keeping to the minimum needed to appropriately support the individual. Telford Mind stores any records in-house, ensuring that the records do not go off premises unless needed to support the service user in an external setting.
 - Telford Mind, in its support of service users who are experiencing crisis, may occasionally need to contact known support agencies, workers or supporters on the service user's behalf if the service user or others are perceived to be at risk. This is always explained to service users. If there is mention of such concerns as acts of terrorism or drug trafficking then we are legally obliged to inform the authorities.
- Approved staff operating different Telford Mind services will share relevant information and records about service users between themselves to ensure a holistic approach of support, as required.
- Students (students on placement at Telford Mind are usually working towards higher level counselling qualifications or similar), will generally be allowed to access and contribute to service user records appropriate to the role that they are undertaking, working under direct supervision.
- Telford Mind has an obligation to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Written or computerised records are stored securely in a locked cabinet, under restricted access, so that only relevant staff can see them. Records on PCs are password protected and secure.
- All staff at induction into any part of Telford Mind must have all implications of this policy for their work explained. This aspect of their work must be part of their review and supervision sessions so that Telford Mind can assure service users of their systems and not betray their trust.
- Service users are given this policy as part of their welcome pack.

Signed:

Date: / / 08