

# Headway North Staffordshire (Head Injuries Association) Ltd

Headway House, Elder Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 2JE  
Tel: 01782 280952



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## **Headway North Staffordshire Confidentiality Policy**

Headway North Staffs recognises that any member, employee, volunteer or trustee has the right to expect that any information given to Headway will be used only for the purpose for which it is given, it will not be passed on to anyone, either inside or outside Headway, without the member/persons consent.

The right to privacy is essential to ensure that the member/person has trust and confidence in Headway and that they are treated with dignity and respect at all times. These same rights extend to all staff, volunteers and trustees of Headway.

The principle of confidentiality also extends to information about the internal affairs of Headway and should be carefully observed by all staff, volunteers and trustees.

### **Definitions:**

Confidential information includes:

- 1) Personal, private and financial information relating to members and former members.
- 2) Personal and private information relating to referrals and potential new members.
- 3) Personal and private information relating to staff, volunteers and trustees.
- 4) Any other information that the management team and trustees identify as confidential.

### **Principles:**

Relationships with members, colleagues and trustees must be based on trust and mutual respect. Correct handling of private, personal and sensitive information is essential in helping to build and maintain trust and respect. Information should only be collected for a specific purpose. A record that permission has been obtained must be kept and the user informed of right of access to that information. This includes information from a third party. Personal information relating to staff, volunteers or trustees of Headway must not be discussed with a third party or in public.

Information that is held regarding any member of Headway, their family members or carers, must not be disclosed unless permission has been obtained.

If information is to be divulged to a third party then consent should be obtained from the user.

Headway believes that there may be occasions when it could be reasonable to breach confidentiality. Confidentiality should only be broken in exceptional

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circumstances and should only occur after careful consideration that the action can be **justified**.

## **Definitions:**

- 1) Where a criminal offence has been or may well be committed.
- 2) Where it is considered that a person's health and safety would be placed at risk.
- 3) When the member is not 'competent' to give consent and to disclose information is deemed in their best interest.
- 4) Statutory duty – eg: drug misuse or disclosure required by law or order of a court.
- 5) With the members consent.

## **Principles:**

Where it is considered essential to breach confidentiality the person should in normal circumstances be informed.

Any member of staff who is unsure as to whether the information they have received should be divulged should seek management advice.

Any member who requests to see a staff member in private or requests that a staff member keeps information to themselves **MUST** be informed that any information divulged may need to be passed on to other staff members or management.

All confidential information relating to members will be treated as such on a team basis. Members must be made aware that the staff team will be made aware of confidential information only when and where necessary.

## **Security:**

Information/records must always be stored securely, with access only for authorised staff.

The provisions of the Data Protection Act will be observed for information stored on computer basis.

Interviews in which personal information is divulged must take place in a suitable room.

All incoming and outgoing mail should be treated as confidential by staff members.

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## **There are other instances whereby confidential information relating to members may be required to be shared these instances include:**

- 1) Support meetings.
- 2) Management team meetings.
- 3) Referral process - Headway North Staffs referral procedure requires the completion of a referral form which necessitates the disclosure of confidential information for the purpose of objective assessment. All information received in this manner will be treated as confidential under the terms of this policy. Confidential information will be kept within the referral team until such time as a permanent placement be offered.
- 4) External Agencies – It is necessary to liaise with other agencies, statutory and voluntary in providing care and support to members. Confidential information will be shared only where necessary and with permission from the member in question.

### Related Policies:

Computer, Email and Internet Usage.  
Data Protection Policy and Procedure.  
Disciplinary Procedure.  
Privacy Policy.  
Social Media Policy.  
Whistle Blowing Policy.

## **I have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy and I understand that by signing the following declaration I am agreeing to abide by the statement.**

*A breach of confidentiality may constitute gross misconduct under the company disciplinary procedures and may lead to dismissal.*

*A copy of this signed statement will remain on my personal file in the Chief Officers office.*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_