



## STaSS Confidentiality Policy

MAY 2015

### Introduction

STaSS is committed at every level and in all aspects of its work to providing a confidential service to all its service users. This policy covers all trustees, staff, students, service users and volunteers. Confidentiality is between the individual and the organisation not between the service user and the trustee, member of staff or volunteer.

### 1. The Policy

1.1 All information will be treated as confidential and will not be divulged to anyone outside the organisation unless it is strictly necessary [see below]. In order that STaSS can provide the best service possible, it may share information with other staff, other professional organisations or occasionally with home support volunteers (Befrienders).

1.2 No conversation about a service user should take place with anyone outside STaSS unless they fall into one of the categories listed above.

1.3 No personal information about a service user will be given to any individual or organisation apart from those specified in point 1.1 and where information is passed over, the consent of the service user will be sought before the information is passed on. The consent of the service user will also be sought when there is a need for STaSS to seek information from another agency. Where necessary, we will ask service users to sign a form when they first come to us giving permission to pass information we consider necessary to other agencies and also giving permission for us to request information.

1.4 Staff, students, volunteers and service users will maintain confidentiality both whilst working, on placement or volunteering and using our service and after ceasing to work, placement, volunteer or use the service.

### 2. Practice and Strategies

2.1 Keep any conversations about your connection with STaSS general and do not mention names, addresses or anything that would enable someone to identify a service user. If you feel uncomfortable about a question reply that you do not know the answer or cannot answer the question.

2.2 Unless you are in a professional setting, do not talk about individual clients and do not say anything to anyone that might enable a client to be identified.

2.3 When the director or support staff first meet a service user they should check how they want to be contacted, if they are happy to be visited at home or if they are in hospital, and by whom and in what capacity.

2.4 Check if the service user is happy to be greeted in a public place.

2.5 Do not mention that you have met someone at a STaSS event.

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### 3. Record Keeping

3.1 Service User Records - written records will be kept securely and will be locked away when they are not in use.

3.2 Volunteer records and staff personal files will be kept securely and locked away when not in use.

3.3 Access to the STaSS client database is restricted to staff and volunteers who need to input information or gather information about clients.

3.4 Any information regarding service users input onto a laptop, memory stick or similar must be moved to the server when staff return to the office and deleted from the portable system.

3.5 Any paper notes written by staff should only identify service users by initial. Information from the notes should be transferred to the server as soon as the member of staff returns to the office and the notes should be shredded.

### 4. Breaches of Confidence

4.1 Inadvertent or deliberate disclosure of a service user's status or connection with STaSS may have serious consequences for the service user and will be considered a disciplinary offence for staff and volunteers. If the person who discloses is a service user they may be excluded from STaSS. In the event of a breach of confidence, the service user concerned will be told. A breach of confidence could lead to legal action being taken against STaSS.

### 5. Difficulties

5.1 Any member of staff, volunteer or service user who is at all concerned about whether or not a matter should be kept confidential should raise it with the director or in her absence the matter should be raised with any of the support service co-ordinator or a support worker.

5.2 The director must be told immediately if it appears someone may cause serious harm to themselves or another person. This would include child abuse, the abuse of a vulnerable adult, a threat to commit suicide or attack someone. In the director's absence the matter must be reported to the support service co-ordinator or a support worker. In most circumstances, the service user should be told that the concerns will be reported, however, if there is perceived to be a safety risk this requirement can be waived.

5.3 If STaSS believes that someone is at serious risk of harm, they may discuss and disclose information to other bodies in order to resolve the situation or obtain help or advice.

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## Confidentiality Policy

This policy was explained to me and I have also read and understood its content. I promise to abide by it now and after my engagement with STaSS.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Policy Review

The Director and Board of Trustees are responsible for reviewing this policy annually and ensuring that it is compliant with current legislation and good practice.

**REVIEWED MAY 2015, NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW MAY 2016**

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