

CONFIDENTIALITY

CAREconfidential is committed at every level and in all aspects of the service it offers to providing a confidential service to all those who face an unplanned pregnancy or who are troubled after an abortion. Confidentiality is between the individual and the organisation not between the individual and the advisor. This means that:

1. Information will be treated in the utmost confidence and will not be divulged to anyone outside the organisation except where extenuating circumstances exist (see below). However, in order that we can provide the best possible help to our clients it may be necessary to share information with a supervisor or manager within CAREconfidential.
2. No conversation about a client should take place with anyone who does not work for the service either as a volunteer or as a paid employee.
3. No personal information about a client will be given to any third party even if the person is a member of their family.
4. CAREconfidential helpline advisors will not use Call return or Caller display facilities. The 141 withhold code will be used if ringing callers back and the 5 (ring back) facility will not be used if the number is engaged.
5. Helpline advisors will use the secrecy button on the phone if it is necessary for them to seek help from a colleague whilst in the middle of their conversation.
6. Information will only be passed to another agency with the consent of the client. If an advisor intends to get information from another agency to help the client or to refer them to a local centre then this must be explained to the client and their permission given.
7. Clients who are under 16 do not require parental permission to use the service but advisors will always encourage them to discuss the issue with their parents. (NB. See exceptions below)

Exceptions:

In certain circumstances CAREconfidential reserves the right to break confidentiality should this be deemed necessary. These circumstances include:

- If the client is under 18 and he/she discloses information that may indicate risk to children.

- If an advisor believes that a client could cause danger to themselves or to others.
- If the client gives information which indicates that a crime has been committed
- If the client gives information which indicates a possible terrorist threat.

We acknowledge that clients remain responsible for their own lives even if that means they decide to take their own life. We will therefore encourage the client to get help and support from the appropriate authority and will encourage them, if necessary, to call an ambulance.

However, women and their families approach CAREconfidential because of the confidential service we offer and it therefore has to be the case that, once an enquiry ends, responsibility resides with the client.

In all of these cases, if a decision has to be taken to break confidentiality, it will be done only after consultation with a Supervisor or member of the Management team.

Advisors will keep careful notes of any incidents and all action taken will be recorded.

We appreciate that this type of enquiry can be stressful for CAREconfidential staff; we will therefore ensure that all staff receives appropriate training and regular supervision.

Use of client information for publicity purposes:

CAREconfidential does wish to be able to publicise the numbers of enquiries which are received and also to be able to give information where appropriate about the kind of enquiries that are being received.

If an enquiry is received, the outcome of which would provide useful material for publicity purposes, then wherever possible the permission of the client will be sought in writing before the story is told to anyone else.

If permission cannot be obtained then any details that would enable identification of the client to be made will be changed.

Use of client information for training purposes:

Examples of enquiries may be used for training purposes but any details which enable identification to be made will be changed.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

In order to maintain and improve the level of service being offered by CAREconfidential, advisors will be monitored from time to time.

For the helpline advisors, this will involve the Call Centre Leader listening occasionally to calls so that an assessment can be made. However, we will only listen to the advisor and will not use equipment that enables us to listen to the client as well.

For the online advisors, supervisors will monitor the advisor's responses to the client regularly.

Record keeping, statistics, evaluation and monitoring

1. Client Records

- Any written client records will be kept securely.
- Any names, addresses and phone numbers will not be kept unless we have express permission from the client.
- Any record sheets will be destroyed after 2 years.
- Clients may ask to see any written records if they so wish although this may prove to be difficult, as we do not take full names and details except in exceptional circumstances.

2. Letters or online messages

- Any letters or printed online messages will be kept securely.
- Any correspondence will be destroyed after 2 years. However, if a letter or online message is received which gives thanks or encouragement then it may be kept provided that permission is sought from the writer. (See below)
- If a letter or online message is received which we would like to use in publicity, we will seek the permission of the writer to ensure that they are happy for us to do this. Information about a client will never be used for publicity purposes unless consent has been obtained (see above).

3. Data Analysis

- Data will be collected to assist in planning, marketing and supervision.
- Data collected will have the sole purpose of enabling us to evaluate and monitor the service we are offering and will not, under any circumstances contain personal information.
- In some instances, CAREconfidential may wish to make information available to public bodies and the media about the kind of enquiries we are taking and the situations they deal with. In these cases

composite or fabricated case histories will be used and will be identified as such.

4. Making the Confidentiality policy known

- All staff will be given a copy of the policy when they join CAREconfidential.
- We will ensure that all staff are trained and able to give information about the Confidentiality Policy if asked.

This policy applies to all paid employees and volunteers of CAREconfidential. All new staff will be given training in its application we will take steps to ensure that existing staff understand its application. The policy will be reviewed annually.