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Confidentiality Policy

The principle of confidentiality is central to any code of ethics. In the same way that we expect our own medical, financial, legal and personal records to be secure and available only to those who we believe have a legitimate right of access. So individuals who receive a service from Foresight are entitled to the same standards from us.

Security of Information

Records of a confidential nature will be kept secure in appropriate locations when in use within the office environment and will, wherever possible, be kept in files which can be closed if members of the public visit. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that information is kept secure.

Client Records & Information Keeping

Records and information relating to individuals and organisations may be important in maintaining a sense of direction, in order to deliver an appropriate service, contact in emergency, for reasons of employment, consistency of approach and in helping to ensure sensible decisions are made. Where such information is kept the aim should be to avoid the accumulation of unnecessary or doubtful information.

- Only necessary information relating to the work of Foresight.
- Information recorded will be factual.
- Information recorded will not contain Foresight's staff opinions where it relates to individuals.
- Necessary information recorded relating to individuals obtained from a third party will be recorded as such.

Record/Information Access

The subject of any records, be it either individual or organisation, will be made aware of such records. The subject of such records will have access to such records at any convenient time (with exceptions).

Exceptions mainly relate to records kept of Individuals and cover the following circumstances:

- Where there are specific legal restrictions on the release of information.
- Where a third party has supplied information, which is necessary, which they regard as confidential, and which would not have been supplied otherwise.
- Where records contain information about a third party which Foresight has no right to share because it was given or obtained in confidence.

Such "restricted" information should be identified at the time of receipt and placed in a "confidential section" of any record and a notation added to that effect. This will allow it to be removed prior to

access by the subjects, it is not implied that circumstances may arise in which all or any of the exceptions stated may occur, merely that such an eventuality is covered.

Disclosure of Information to a Third Party

Confidential information will not be shared unless staff are satisfied that:

- The person/agency has a bona fide entitlement to that information.
- The identity of the person/agency is established without a doubt (telephone requests should be handled using the call back method).
- The person/agency will handle any information in a confidentiality manner.
- Only in exceptional** circumstance should confidential information be disclosed to a third party without the agreement of the provider or subject of that information.

Right of Complaint

The subject and providers of confidential information have the right to complain regarding this subject using the Foresight complaint procedure.

Openness

Individuals and organisations will be made aware of Foresight's policy. When such records are kept, copies of this policy will be available to individuals and organisations upon request and will be prominently displayed in Foresight's premises.

** "exceptional" means where there is a danger to life if information is withheld or where a person (client, carer, paid or unpaid member of staff, or any other individual involved directly or indirectly) is at risk of injury, or where disclosure is required by law.

This information is also available in other formats, languages and picture format upon request.