

# **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

PHOENIX HOUSE recognises that confidentiality is the cornerstone of professional practice providing means by which other values such as privacy, respect, choice, independence and empowerment of vulnerable people can be promoted.

The basic principle underlying confidentiality is that information about a person should be deemed confidential unless that person decides otherwise. It follows that where it is deemed appropriate to disclose information about a person that it is done with their consent.

All applicants, service users, and staff have a right to privacy and an expectation that any information about them will be handled sensitively and confidentially. PHOENIX HOUSE will act to protect the rights of individuals by having a clear confidentiality policy and ensuring that all individuals likely to be affected by that policy are aware of the principles, policies and procedures involved.

All personal information relating to applicants, service users, and staff that is not a matter of public record will be:

- Obtained fairly
- Held for specific purposes and used only for those purposes
- Relevant, accurate and kept up to date
- Corrected if shown to be inaccurate
- Kept no longer than necessary and destroyed when no longer required
- Protected against loss or disclosure
- Treated as confidential at all times

## **Limits to Confidentiality**

All individuals need to be informed that there are limits to confidentiality and that there are occasions when PHOENIX HOUSE has no alternative but to disclose or pass on information. The circumstances under which confidentiality cannot be maintained include allegations or information about:

- Criminal activities
- Potential or actual risk to service users
- Potential or actual risk to the public

Other circumstances where information may be disclosed without prior consent of the individual are:

- To comply with the law e.g. police, Inland Revenue etc.
- Where there is a clear health and safety risk
- Where information is required for statistical, monitoring or research purposes, provided it is not possible to identify the individuals to whom the information relates.