RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP

Confidentiality and Information Sharing Guidance for people using Richmond Fellowship (RF) Services

Introduction to our policy

Richmond Fellowship (RF) is committed to providing the people who use its Services with the best care and support it can. For us to do this well it is necessary to know information about you (for example, your background, your needs, your strengths etc.). In order for us to support you, we ask you to trust us with your personal information. You should feel confident that we will treat your information with care and only share it with others when absolutely necessary.

Sometimes it will be helpful to involve others, but we will discuss doing so with you beforehand to obtain your agreement. RF believes that by being open and working together with you and others involved in your care and support, that you will get better outcomes.

Confidentiality is not about keeping secrets but means that any information you give us is protected and only known by those staff who need to know about you to provide you with support. We feel that this is the best way of ensuring that our Staff and the team which will be providing the support to you can do so.

Having accurate and up to date information is important so we will ask you regularly to let us know where something has changed such as your phone number or address for example. You have the right to know what information we hold about you.

Where we are required to share statistical information with commissioners we will tell you what this will entail. In most cases this does not include information that could be used to identify you. RF may also use statistical data to check the quality of services and how good they are at promoting recovery.

Consent - agreeing to Store and Disclose Information

When you were referred to RF you will have signed a referral form and this includes your agreement for your information to be shared with us. This includes your permission to store your information on RF Connect – the electronic system we use to record our work with you.

We have a form, which we call 'Consent to Store and Disclose Information', this is a list of people you have given permission for us share information with. A copy is kept on your case file. You can always ask your allocated worker for a copy of this form. RF will involve you fully in the decision to let other people have relevant information

about you. This will include, who will be involved and what kind of information is needed, and why.

Sharing information without your consent

In some limited circumstances it may be necessary to give other agencies information about you without your permission:

- When Staff believe a serious crime has been committed and you may be involved or need protection (safeguarding)
- If children are at risk, or
- Where there is risk of serious harm to yourself or others.

You will not be able to prevent this, but you will be told why this is necessary and what information is shared where possible. You may also complain if you do not agree with the decision that has been made.

Keeping your information safe and accurate

Information, which is held by RF, will be held securely in our RF Connect system which can only be accessed by those RF Staff involved in your care and support. It is secured by the same kind of technology that is used for online banking. Where paper copies of any information are being kept they will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and only the Staff who support you will have access.

Where information is given to us by 'third parties' for example, the Probation Service or Social Services, that remains their property and cannot be seen by you without their written permission.

We also hope you will want to be involved in making sure the information about you is accurate, useful and up to date for example, ongoing case notes, reviews etc. On occasions you may disagree with what people are saying about you. Should this be the case we will do all we can to try and ensure the information is fair, accurate and agreed. We will also record the differing viewpoints if agreement cannot be reached.

To ensure that you have every opportunity to see the information kept by RF that relates to you, you will also be offered the opportunity to read your file at each key-working session and review of your care/support. Your Key Worker will also draw your attention to any new reports or documents that have been added to your file and offer you copies.

There are laws to protect the storage and use of data (information). The legislation is called the 'General Data Protection Regulation' and Data Protection Act 2018. The Act allows individuals to view any of their personal information held and puts specific responsibilities onto organisations such as RF, as to how and for what purpose information about you can be held. RF adheres to the requirements in the act. This information is contained in what is known as a privacy notice which is included with this document.

This page is left blank on purpose.