

# Midhurst Town Trust - Confidentiality Policy

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of Midhurst Town Trust. The data covered by the confidentiality policy includes:

- Information about the organisation, for example, its plans or finances
- Information about other organisations
- Information about individuals, for example, clients, volunteers and staff whether recorded electronically or in paper form

All staff, volunteers and others who work at Midhurst Town Trust must respect the need for confidentiality of information held about anyone who comes into contact with the charity, and about any charity business. This is expected to continue even when contact has ceased with this person, and when the volunteer or staff member no longer works for Midhurst Town Trust.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Midhurst Town Trust's Data Protection Policy.

## **Information about individuals**

Midhurst Town Trust is committed to ensuring confidential services to all individuals. The confidentiality is between the individual and the organisation, not the members of staff delivering a particular service.

Confidential information will not be sought from a client unless expressly in the interests of that client, i.e. to enable a better service delivery.

Information will only be passed to another agency or to other individuals outside of the charity with the consent of the client, where possible this will be with written consent. If a member of staff or volunteer intends to get information from another agency to help the client or to refer them to another agency then this must be explained to the client and their permission given.

No personal information about staff, volunteers or clients will be given to any third party including a member of their family, without the consent of the client. Information will only be divulged on a "need to know" basis.

Information will be treated in 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 manager or colleagues within Midhurst Town Trust

All customers and clients are entitled to privacy and will be made aware that they can specifically request to be seen in private.

In no circumstances should details of a client be discussed by anyone outside of the organisation or in an open plan area in such a manner that it is possible to identify the client.

Staff and volunteers should take due care and attention when speaking to clients and using the telephone or fax. No client should be able to hear a conversation or personal details of another service user.

### **Use of client information for publicity, reporting or training purposes**

Midhurst Town Trust does need to be able to give information where appropriate about the impact of our services.

If one of our services has an outcome which would provide useful material for publicity, reporting or training 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.

### **Limits to client confidentiality**

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

- If a member of staff believes that a client could cause danger to themselves or to others.
- If a member of staff suspects abuse or has knowledge of abuse
- If the client gives information which indicates that a crime has been committed
- If disclosure is required by law, for example, by the police
- If a person is felt to lack the mental capacity to make a decision. In such cases staff or volunteers will discuss with a manager and they will only act in the client's best interest.
- If the client gives information which indicates a possible terrorist threat.

The decision on whether to break confidentiality will be decided on a case by case basis and always in conjunction with a manager.

### **Access to data**

This Policy operates on a "need to know" basis and apart from staff and volunteers in the office of Midhurst Town Trust no-one will have access to client or organisational information unless it is relevant to the service or their work.

All clients and customers have the right to request access to all information stored about them, and have a right to see a copy of this confidentiality policy on request.

If any party concerned has a sensory or physical impairment, efforts should be made to ensure that all aspects of this policy and exchanges between parties are understood.

Significant breaches of this policy will be handled under Midhurst Town Trust's disciplinary procedures.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the policy when they join Midhurst Town Trust and will sign the confidentiality statement that they will abide by this policy. Midhurst Town Trust will ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained in the application of this policy.

**Policy review**

The policy will be reviewed in November 2019 and approved by the Board of Trustees. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Date this policy was approved by the Board of trustees:

## MIDHURST TOWN TRUST

### Confidentiality statement for staff and volunteers

When working for MIDHURST TOWN TRUST, you will often need to have access to confidential information which may include, for example:

- Personal information about individuals who are clients or otherwise involved in the activities organised by MIDHURST TOWN TRUST.
- Information about the internal business of MIDHURST TOWN TRUST.
- Personal information about staff or volunteers working for MIDHURST TOWN TRUST.

MIDHURST TOWN TRUST is committed to keeping this information confidential, in order to protect people and MIDHURST TOWN TRUST itself. ‘Confidential’ means that all access to information must be on a “need to know” basis and properly authorised basis. You must use only the information you have been authorised to use, and for purposes that have been authorised. You should also be aware that under the Data Protection Act, unauthorised access to data about individuals is a criminal offence.

You must assume that information is confidential unless you know that it is intended by MIDHURST TOWN TRUST to be made public. Passing information between a branch and the UK office, or between MIDHURST TOWN TRUST and a mailing house, or *vice versa* does not count as making it public, but passing information to another organisation does count.

You must also be particularly careful not to disclose confidential information to unauthorised people or cause a breach of security. In particular you must:

- not compromise or seek to evade security measures (including computer passwords);
- be particularly careful when sending information to other agencies and organisations;
- not gossip about confidential information, either with colleagues or people outside MIDHURST TOWN TRUST;
- not disclose information — especially over the telephone — unless you are sure that you know who you are disclosing it to, and that they are authorised to have it.

If you are in doubt about whether to disclose information or not, do not guess. Withhold the information while you check with an appropriate person whether the disclosure is appropriate.

Your confidentiality obligations continue to apply indefinitely after you have stopped working or volunteering for MIDHURST TOWN TRUST.

**I have read and understand the above statement and the Confidentiality Policy. I accept my responsibilities regarding confidentiality.**

**Signed:**

**Date:**