



**Brent Centre
for Young People**
healthy minds, brighter futures.

Confidentiality Policy

Last reviewed: January 2025

Next review: January 2027

Introduction

This document is in place to ensure that the Brent Centre for Young People (BCYP/the Centre) has clear guidelines on confidentiality.

Confidentiality is central to the work of everyone at the BCYP. Respecting patients' and partner organisations' privacy and confidentiality are fundamental requirements for maintaining trust. The professional management of confidentiality concerns the protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure. Disclosure may be authorised by client consent or the law. Any disclosures of patient confidences should be undertaken in ways that best protect the patient's trust and respect patient autonomy and wellbeing. All information about young people or partner organisations who access our services is confidential. Anything that is discussed with any member of staff at the BCYP remains confidential to the BCYP, unless it is likely to be a threat to someone's wellbeing.

This policy applies to all work with young people and partner organisations carried out by the BCYP – whether at the BCYP's premises or at another outreach location.

Confidentiality between staff

All staff working at the BCYP must follow their own professional code of conduct and the law. This means that they must make every effort to protect confidentiality. It also means that no identifiable information about a young person using the service is passed on to anyone or any outside agency without the expressed permission of the young person – except when this is essential for providing care necessary to protect somebody's health, safety or wellbeing.

All staff are individually accountable for their own actions. Staff should work together to ensure standards of confidentiality are maintained and that any improper disclosures are avoided.

Standards of confidentiality apply to all staff working at the BCYP – including clinical staff, trainees, volunteers, research staff, administrative staff, and maintenance staff who are bound by contracts of employment to maintain confidentiality.

Patients' full names and all other identifying information is kept confidential and locked securely.

External

Staff must not reveal to anybody outside the organisation personal information they learn in the course of their work. The exception to this is sharing information with other health professionals when it is deemed necessary to offer the best care. Clinical staff should be accountable to their patients and to their profession for their management of confidentiality in general, and particularly for any disclosures made without their patient's consent.

BCYP has a form which can be completed by the patient or service user giving written consent for BCYP to liaise with other organisations on their behalf. This happens particularly when we provide practical support for a young person. Consent can also be obtained in writing via email or letter. Consent can be given verbally, although this should if possible be followed by written consent to confirm what has been agreed.

Exceptional circumstance & duty of care

BCYP has a duty of care to its patients and service users. There may be circumstances in which there is a risk of harm to the patient or another person. In such an event, it may be necessary for information to be shared with other health care professionals outside BCYP. This is in line with various professional body standards e.g. BACP Ethnical Framework. Wherever possible, the service would seek the patient's agreement when the health, safety or welfare of the patient, or others, would otherwise be at risk.

Such cases might include:

- When the client/patient has threatened to, or is likely to, cause injury to a third party or to themselves. This would include physical injury, self-harm and suicide;
- When the client/patient discloses information that indicates that significant harm is being caused to them or to another child, as defined by the Children Act (1989);
- When the client/patient discloses an act of terrorism as defined in the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1971);
- When instructed by a court of law;
- In a life-threatening situation or in the case of a client/patient needing immediate medical assistance on the premises, it will be necessary to give basic information to the paramedics.

Even in cases in which a disclosure is necessary, staff will first make every attempt to discuss the situation with the young person and to gain their consent about what will be said – and to whom.

If the young person still refuses to allow disclosure, the member of staff can take advice from colleagues within the organisation, the CEO or from a professional or regulatory body (such as Social Services Child Protection teams), in order to decide whether a disclosure without consent is justified to protect the young person (or another person).

If a decision is taken to disclose information, the young person should always be informed before the disclosure is made, unless if to do so could be dangerous.

Whenever possible, any such decisions should be shared with the CEO and/or another senior member of the Centre staff and be accurately documented immediately. In cases when information is requested by a third party (for example, Social Services, Youth Offending Teams, etc.), no information will be divulged without discussing it with the young person first.

Working with under 16-year-olds

Any decision to disclose information to protect the health, safety or wellbeing of a young person will be based on the degree of current or potential harm – not on the age of the young person. The BCYP recognises the importance of confidentiality in offering and developing a trusting relationship with young people accessing services – including those young people under 16 years of age.

BCYP staff will work within the documentation of the Children Act (1989), Gillick Ruling (Lord Frasier's Guidelines, 1985) and the local area child protection committee (ACPC) guidelines.

As such, staff will ensure that:

- The young person understands any advice or information given to them and is “competent to consent to treatment”. This understanding must be confirmed by the young person and not assumed by the member of staff;
- The intervention provided by the member of staff is necessary to protect the young person from suffering from physical and/or mental health problems.

If parental consent has not been obtained, the member of staff must be satisfied that the provision of appropriate intervention will benefit the welfare of the young person and that they have encouraged the young person to share the information with the parent.

Clinical record keeping

For information and guidelines surrounding clinical records and notes, please refer to the Centre's Record Keeping Policy.

Supervision

Each member of clinical staff is professionally required to attend regular clinical meetings and supervision, in which they reflect upon their work with patients with an experienced and appropriately qualified supervisor. This work is governed by the same principles of confidentiality. Confidential information about clients may be shared within teams where the client has consented or knowingly accepted a service on this basis; the information can be adequately protected from unauthorised further disclosures; and the disclosure enhances the quality of service available to clients or improves service delivery.

Discussing confidentiality with young people

Staff should endeavour to explain the BCYP Confidentiality Policy with all young people accessing the Centre's services. Any concerns about this policy and its implications should be discussed in detail with the young person to ensure that they are clear about its meaning and parameters.

A copy of the BCYP Confidentiality Policy should also be available for young people to see for themselves, should they wish to do so, and should be publicly displayed in waiting areas.

Discussing matters of confidentiality at the Centre

Problems that arise over implementing the Centre's Confidentiality Policy will be brought to clinical meetings, supervision groups and discussed at staff meetings. Senior clinical staff and in particular the CEO remain available to speak to about any issues regarding confidentiality when needed.

Information for Young People about Confidentiality

-To be displayed in the waiting room-

The **Brent Centre for Young People** is a centre for young people who require information, advice or help with a wide variety of issues and concerns.

When young people find out about the service, one of the first questions they usually ask is:

“Will they tell anyone else about my problems?”

Or

“Will my parents/teachers/social workers be told what I say or that I’ve come here for help?”

These are very important questions to ask, and the answers are not very simple so we hope to set out below exactly what will and will not be confidential when you visit the Centre or talk to one of our workers at another venue.

We understand and respect that young people want to talk to a worker “in confidence” and we try to honour this at all times. Any information you share with your worker will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Situations when disclosure might be necessary:

In order to promote your safety and wellbeing, there are occasionally some exceptions when we might have to share the information you give with someone else.

If for instance, you tell a worker something that describes a current situation where you are in immediate risk of serious harm, or you know somebody else who is in immediate danger, we may need to inform somebody about this.

However, before any information is disclosed to anyone, your worker will, wherever possible, first seek your agreement about what you would find most helpful and who you think should be told.

Confidentiality is a complicated issue to explain and understand. Therefore, if you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this page, please ask one of the staff at the Centre who will be glad to answer your questions.