



Older People Active Lives

Confidentiality

Information for Staff and
Volunteers





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Aims of this information sheet

This Information Sheet provides advice on handling confidential information that staff and volunteers will be subject to. It covers a section on What information is confidential; What to do with confidential information and some related Do's and Don'ts.

Please note

Confidentiality may be broken in an emergency situation eg sharing information about a member to the emergency services, or where there is a safeguarding concern. Please complete the OPAL Safeguarding Awareness module and read the OPAL Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure for full information as to your responsibilities under Safeguarding.



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Introduction

While you are a member of staff or a volunteer with OPAL Services, you will probably hear and learn much about the personal lives of the older people who receive a service from us and perhaps about other volunteers and the staff too. It is important that you respect and keep confidential such information, even if you are not specifically asked to do so.

Only in an emergency situation, or where there is a danger to life and limb, should information about someone be shared with others outside of OPAL, for example the emergency services, a doctor, social worker, the police or sheltered housing manager.

If there is a safeguarding issue or concern you need to inform your line manager / Organiser straight away as per the OPAL Safeguarding Adults Policy and procedure.



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What information is confidential?

Any information (whether it be from a conversation, on paper or electronic) about:



People - members/clients, volunteers, staff (e.g. conversations involving personal information about people, paperwork such as rotas, volunteers' address lists.)



Money – e.g. your Club's financial affairs, donations, members' financial details.



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Internal Affairs of OPAL and its OPAL Services.



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What to do with confidential information



- Please keep written and electronic information secure at home, so that it cannot be read by others who are not part of OPAL and its OPAL Services. This may require a password on your electronic equipment.



- Electronic records of members should only be held within the OPAL library and on the CRM system Plinth.



- Once you no longer need the paperwork (e.g. copies of members'/clients' address lists), please rip it up into small pieces or shred it so that no-one else can read it.



- Please make sure you delete old emails and texts etc. containing personal and confidential information from your computer, phone, tablet etc. on a regular basis.



- It is important that information, both verbal and written, about staff, volunteers and the older people who receive a service from us, is kept within the organisation.



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Who should you share information with?

- **Please ask the person** who gives you confidential information for their permission before you share it with others.
- Once you have obtained their permission, please share any information, which helps us care for our members/clients, with your fellow volunteers/volunteer team and your organiser.
- Please **always** pass on any concerns to your organiser if you suspect that a member/client is being treated or cared for in an inappropriate manner by others, whether they be family, friends or professionals.
- In an emergency or where there is danger to life and limb, please share any information with whoever needs to know, e.g. the emergency services, home care staff, housing manager etc., seeking the person's permission if at all possible.
- It is more difficult to know what to do if someone tells you something in confidence and you think that their health and/or well-being is at risk. However if someone wants to tell you something and asks you to promise not to tell anyone, please stop them before they start to tell you. Explain that you cannot make and keep such a promise. If it is something serious that affects the person's health or safety or if their well-being is at risk, it is your duty to report what you have been told or have a concern about.
- The OPAL Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures provides full information and outlines your responsibilities.
- Please complete the OPAL Safeguarding Awareness module for an overview of Safeguarding and your responsibilities.



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Some related Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- When recording information, e.g. in a day book, only include personal information that is relevant.
- If a member/client should ask you to give information about themselves to people outside of OPAL and its OPAL Services (e.g. their Doctor) it is helpful to keep your organiser informed, with the member's/client's permission.
- Tell people that staff and volunteers can be contacted via the OPAL office or give them your organiser's work contact details. Messages and emails are always passed on. You could also tell the enquirer that you will contact the person yourself and that you will ask them to contact the enquirer directly.

Don'ts

- Please do not talk to people outside of OPAL and its OPAL Services about the older people who receive a service from us or about other volunteers.
- Please don't give out **home** contact details of staff and other volunteers to members/clients and others outside of OPAL and its OPAL Services. This includes the press and other social media, such as Facebook.



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Further Reading

- Please complete the OPAL Safeguarding Awareness for Volunteers module
- OPAL Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure

Links to both of the above can be found in your Volunteer Handbook.