

1. General principles

1.1. WhistleblowersUK recognises that employees, volunteers and Board Members gain information about individuals and organisations during the course of their work or activities. In most cases such information will not be confidential and colleagues have to exercise common sense and discretion in identifying whether information is expected to be confidential. This policy aims to give guidance but if in doubt, colleagues should seek advice from the Chief Executive.

1.2. Colleagues will only share information with other colleagues in order to discuss issues and seek advice.

1.3. Colleagues will not exchange personal information or comments (gossip) about individuals with whom they have a professional relationship other than when relevant for progressing their case.

1.4. Information given to staff members or volunteers acting on behalf of WhistleblowersUK is considered to be given to WhistleblowersUK as an agency rather than to the individual staff/Board member or volunteer.

1.5. Constructive liaison with other agencies is sometimes essential if individuals and groups are to be offered an effective service by WhistleblowersUK. However, confidential matters will not be discussed outside of WhistleblowersUK without the prior permission of the individual or organisation, except in special circumstances where WhistleblowersUK believes in good faith that the law requires it.

1.6. Where there is a legal duty on WhistleblowersUK to disclose information, the person to whom the confidentiality is owed will be informed that disclosure has or will be made.

2. Why information is held

2.1. Most information held by WhistleblowersUK relates to whistleblowing activity, lobbying and research.

2.2. Information may be kept to enable WhistleblowersUK to understand the history and activities of Whistleblowers in order to deliver the most appropriate services.

2.3. WhistleblowersUK has a role in putting people in touch with legal, media, voluntary and community organisations and keeps contact details which are passed on only with consent, and not if the individual, group or organisation requests that the details remain confidential.

2.4. Information about ethnicity and disability of users is only kept for the purposes of monitoring our equal opportunities policy.

3. Access to information

3.1. Information is confidential to WhistleblowersUK as an organisation but may be passed to colleagues, line managers or Board Members to ensure the best quality service for users.

3.2. WhistleblowersUK believes all information disclosed to us is sensitive and will endeavour to ensure its confidentiality.

3.3. Colleagues should not withhold information from the Chief Executive.

3.4. Users may have sight of WhistleblowersUK records held in their name or that of their organisation. The request must be in writing to the Chief Executive giving 14 days notice and be signed by the individual, or in the case of an organisation's records, by the Chairman of the Board or equivalent person. Sensitive information as outlined in para 3.2 will only be made available to the person or organisation named on the file.

3.5. When photocopying or working on confidential documents, colleagues must ensure they are not seen by people in passing. This also applies to information on computer screens.

4. Storing information

4.1. All data will be stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

5. Deleting information

5.1 WhistleblowersUK will delete personal information at the request of the person concerned, unless there is a lawful reason not so to do*. All that is needed is a verified request via letter or email.

*For example, contact details of a malicious complainant may be retained.

5.2 Personal information will be retained while cases are ongoing and/or the retention of such data is relevant. WhistleblowersUK will conduct regular reviews of personal information held and will destroy securely all data which in their opinion it is not necessary to retain in line with ICO data destruction guidance.

The correspondence address is Broadhurst, Gurney Slade, Radstock BA3 4TT.

6. Duty to disclose information

6.1. There is a legal duty to disclose some information including that relating to drug trafficking, money laundering, acts of terrorism and treason.

6.2. In addition, a colleague believing an illegal act has taken place, or that a service user is at risk of harming themselves or others, must report this to the Chief Executive who will evaluate the report and if appropriate report it to the appropriate authorities.

6.3. Service users will be informed of this disclosure.

Last Review: October 2021

Next Review: September 2022

If you have any questions concerning this Policy or wish to submit a Subject Access Request please contact

The Data Controller, WhistleblowersUK, Broadhurst, Gurney Slade, Radstock BA3 4TT

or by email to secretary@wbuk.org