



CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING POLICY

Confidentiality

Caseworkers i.e. counsellors/therapists/mentors/family support workers/volunteers/students may discuss issues arising from their work regarding their client with their supervisor or supervision group, anonymously in order that no details that could identify the client. However, if the client has been referred by another party, it may be in the client's interest for there to be some liaison if deemed appropriate. Sometimes this may be just confirming that the client has had a number of sessions, other times you may want to talk to someone on the client's behalf, such as a doctor.

Because confidentiality can, therefore, be on different levels caseworkers will discuss the issue fully with the client and agree the level of confidentiality most appropriate for their situation. If a caseworker feels that someone may need to know information about the client's support sessions, they will ask the client to make this clear to the caseworker at the beginning of the sessions. The caseworker will then discuss this with the client and if it is agreed they will ask the client to sign a form to confirm this and clarify the amount of information to be given.

Where written information may be required to be passed on to a third party our policy is to restrict the information to the minimum and password protect document if sent electronically. This would normally be to provide only written confirmation of attendance and non-attendance and factual information regarding the presenting problem and termination of support. Caseworkers are not always able to provide in-depth reports commenting on the content of sessions, or to give opinions or diagnosis.

The Bungalow Partnership is a registered charity and adheres to the Ethical Framework for Good Practice and Complaints Procedure as set out by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

All caseworkers must make themselves aware of their responsibility for confidentiality and the sanctions that exist for breaking the guidelines. However, there are some situations, which are exceptions to the general rules of confidentiality.

These include :

1. If caseworkers think there is a serious risk of harm to the client and/or others.
2. Where caseworkers cannot contact the client but suspect they are in danger. For example, if the client had not been seen for several days and colleagues and friends felt concerned, caseworkers may disclose information without your agreement.
3. Where there is a legal requirement to disclose information. This could be for example because it has been ordered by a court, or because the law requires, for example under the Terrorism Act 2000 or the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986, for information to be passed on without consent. In the first and second of these cases, the caseworker would attempt to talk this through with the client beforehand if possible.

Notes and Record Keeping

Part of our confidentiality policy is the way we keep notes and records. Again our policy is to be open and transparent with the client so that they have all the information they need about the support service. To this end, it may be useful to know what information we keep, where it is kept and for how long.

The Bungalow Partnership keep minimal notes and records. However, it is often in a client's interest that we have a record of the process in case it is needed later and also so that caseworkers can be accountable for their work. To this end, we keep several types of information:



1. **Client Contact information:** Name, address, date of birth, contact number and GP's name and address and next of kin if appropriate.
2. **Background information:** Such as whether the client is off sick, if they are on medication, who referred them and any other details which may be relevant to the support process.
3. **Client's signed contract** with The Bungalow Partnership
4. **Case notes:** These are details of the main focus of the support session and any important information, which needs to be recorded such as referrals or any additional support that was suggested, any information that demonstrates good practice in our work with the client and any other relevant information. This information will be held confidentially within The Bungalow Partnership.
5. **Process notes:** Some caseworkers keep their own notes about their work in the support sessions. This is intended to help them to hold onto important issues between sessions and to identify areas they want to look at in supervision. These notes if retained should be kept in a locked file cabinet with minimum personal information attached.
6. **Client's completed 'Core' forms:** Caseworkers use these to evaluate change and monitor the outcomes of support sessions. Core stands for 'Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation'.
7. **Information needed for Statistical Purposes:** Non-identifiable statistics are gathered annually to provide details of any general trends or patterns to inform our practice and influence the provision within The Bungalow Partnership.

Security

All confidential material is kept in a secure office in locked filing cabinets. No one can accidentally access the information and it is available only to the support team. **If information is carried from one location to another, this will be in a locked briefcase or other container.** Client records are kept for seven years.

Access to Information

If a client has any concerns about The Bungalow Partnership's policy on confidentiality and note keeping, please discuss it fully with your caseworker. A client may request to see the information held on them, they need to do this in writing. The Bungalow Partnership will be happy to book a session the client's caseworker to go through their records with them, normally within 21 days.

If you require any further information, please contact us on:

Tel: 01642 595363

Or write to:

The Bungalow Partnership

Rose Wood Academy

The Garth

Coulby Newham

Middlesbrough

TS8 OUG