



The Gatehouse Confidentiality Policy

Policy ID Number: P18

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: October 2023 Valid until: October 2026

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to give clear guidelines/understanding to all of the Gatehouse staff, volunteers and students about the Gatehouse confidentiality policy in relation to working with each other and Guests of the project.

Everyone at the Gatehouse needs to feel confident that personal information will not be disclosed to outside agencies except in exceptional and clearly explained circumstances, unless his/her expressed permission is given. We recognise that personal information belongs to the individual concerned.

- 1.1. The Gatehouse Community Drop-In Centre offers free support services for adults aged 25+ who are: homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income and/or looking for company & community. The Gatehouse offers a free cafe (six evenings a week), therapeutic workshops, bespoke one-to-one support, a shower and clothing project, a counselling service, and works in partnership to manage and support the Lived Experience Advisory Forum.
- 1.2. The Gatehouse will encourage a culture of confidentiality within the organisation by restricting personal information shared by a Guest/staff member/volunteer/student to the least number of people necessary.
- 1.3. Staff, volunteers or students may disclose shared information on Guests to relevant member(s) of staff and/or Coordinators. However, except in exceptional circumstances (see below) no information will be passed on to people outside of the Gatehouse staff team without the Guest's permission.
- 1.4. All personal written information about Guests/staff members/volunteers/students will be kept in a secure place and/or stored on a computer/management system that is password protected. Please also reference the Gatehouse UK GDPR Policy 2023.
- 1.5. Statistical records that are passed on to outside agencies for monitoring and evaluation purposes will not contain personal information that would enable an individual to be identified.
- 1.6. The privacy of all the Guests using the Gatehouse will be respected by staff, volunteers and students at all times. In particular, by trying to ensure that conversations and phone calls dealing with personal matters cannot, as far as possible, be overheard.

Exceptional circumstances

The decision to disclose personal information to an outside agency with or without a Guest's permission will be taken in consultation with the Operations Manager/CEO/Senior Project Workers (café).

In the following exceptional circumstances information will be disclosed to other agencies or third parties without prior agreement of the person or persons concerned:

- Where there is a serious risk of harm to the person concerned (self) or to other people.
- Where is a child protection concern and our co-operation is required under The Children's Act 2004.
- Where disclosure of information is a legal requirement.
- When there is a concern of neglect or abuse (Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults)

Reporting a concern (Guests)

2.1. Whenever possible gain consent from the individual, if it is assessed as safe to do so.

2.2. Make sure the person is not in immediate danger. If they are deemed to be in immediate danger, **seek urgent medical help or ring the police (if you think a crime has been committed) and ring 999**. Talk to the Operations Manager/CEO if you are unsure.

Document the concern on Lamplight under the Guests Profile and follow the procedures to retain the data for 50 years to comply with the Gatehouse liability insurance.

2.3. Raise the concern in writing with the Operations Manager/CEO or the Safeguarding Trustee within 1 working day. If the person is not in immediate danger, a discussion will then take place and a decision can then be made about whether concerns about the person should be passed on to a responsible person/agency or managed internally. This decision will be made collectively.

2.4. Document the concern, all details moving forward, decision making and actions taken on Lamplight.

2.4. Once the concern is closed/complete, upload any electronic data i.e. emails, relating to the safeguarding concern on the same client's profile to ensure that it is held securely for 50 years in line with the Gatehouse insurance policy. Once a case is closed, print off all documentation which will then be kept in the CEO's locked cabinet.

Reporting a concern (staff/volunteer/student)

3. Follow the Guest guidance above but do not share the details with your colleagues or on Lamplight. The concern must be directly raised with the Operations Manager/CEO/Safeguarding Trustee.

How to work alongside people when one of the below concerns have been identified

- Where there is a serious risk of harm to the person concerned (self) or to other people – **see below process**.
- Where is a child protection concern and our co-operation is required under The Children's Act 2004 – **refer to the Gatehouse Child Protection Procedure**.
- Where disclosure of information is a legal requirement – **refer to this policy and the Gatehouse Child Protection and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy/Procedure**.
- When there is a concern of neglect or abuse (Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults) – **refer to the Gatehouse Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**.

The most powerful tool you can give someone is to **actively listen!** Also to **not** make promises to keep any secrets, as we all have a duty to report any of the above concerns.

The process to follow is a person is disclosing that they are a risk to self or others.

STEP 1

- **Listen!**
- Ask the person **directly** if they are suicidal/has the intention to hurt someone else.
- Ask if they have a plan to carry out what they are telling you that they want to do.
- Ask if they have **the means to act out their plan**.
- Ask if they have **any mental health professionals working with them**, who and from where e.g. Abingdon Adult Mental Health Team. Try and gain these details if you can.
- Try and **confirm the person's name, contact number and where they are residing**.
- Let the person know (**if it is safe to do so**) that you will need to share the information with a senior team member to try and ensure that they are kept safe. Ask a colleague to sit with the person while you do that (**if it is safe to do so**).

STEP 2

- If you have time, call the Operations Manager or CEO. **If the person or someone else is in immediate danger call 999 first.**
- **If it is safe to do so**, go back and support the person until emergency services arrive. Carry on listening and asking distracting questions if appropriate e.g. what are their plans for the next two days, do they have any pets, what do they like watching or listening to.

STEP 3

If it doesn't warrant an immediate 999 call you can try a variety of the below but also gain advice from your line manager. **A risk to others that involves a disclosure, a plan and the means is always a 999 call!**

- Call the person's **GP practice and ask for an urgent conversation and appointment with a GP**. Write the appointment date and time down for the person.
- Call the person's **Adult Mental Health Team, ask advice and for an urgent appointment**.
- **If it is out of hours**, call 111 or Luther Street Medical Centre who can offer advice. You can also call the Oxford Health Crisis and Home Resolution Team on 01865 902906 or 904996 (**if these numbers do not work, ring the Warnford Hospital switch board and asked to be put through to that team**).
- Make a referral to **Safe Haven in the person's local area**. Their role is to support people in crisis and keep them safe in unsociable hours.
- **If a disclosure is made to you over the phone, call 101 or 999 and request that the police action a welfare check at the person's home as soon as possible.**

In all circumstances endeavour to get a **second colleague** who can make the calls and google up to date service contact details. If it isn't an immediate 999 call, **always try and gain advice** from your line manager, the Operations Manager or the CEO.