

Confidentiality Policy

July 2023

The Haven Pregnancy Counselling Centre recognises that confidentiality is of the utmost importance to clients and therefore essential to the effective running of its services. The Confidentiality Policy applies to all the services that The Haven provides and is explained to clients at the initial appointment, forming part of the contract they sign with The Haven.

Confidentiality is held between the client and the organisation and not the individual Advisor, therefore information about a client may be shared within the organisation (Advisors and Trustees) and with the Supervisor, all of whom are bound to maintain confidentiality. Any discussion concerning clients within the organisation will be purposeful, sensitive and respectful.

Information will only be shared with others (e.g. other agencies) with the client's specific permission.

N.B. Clients under 16 are not required to have parental consent to use our services but Advisors will always encourage these younger clients to discuss the situation with their parents or carer (see Safeguarding Procedures for specific guidelines).

Exceptions

In certain circumstances, we reserve the right to break confidentiality, should this be deemed necessary. These circumstances include:

1. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.
2. Where the Advisor believes there to be a risk to the safety of the client or another.
3. Where the client gives information which indicates a possible terrorist attack.
4. If necessary, for reasons of public interest in the area of public health (e.g., needing to inform NHS Track and Trace due to a suspected Covid-19 infection).
5. Where The Haven has been instructed by the courts (including in limited circumstances by the police, acting on the authority of the courts) to reveal information. This will only be done if the courts or the Police ask in writing through their official channels.

In each of these cases, if a decision is made to break confidentiality, it will be done only after consultation with the Supervisor and Centre Manager.

If confidentiality must be breached:

- The Advisor will make every effort to discuss it with the client unless this is deemed inadvisable.
- The client will be encouraged to contact the relevant authority involved themselves.
- If the client is unwilling to take action, then the decision to breach confidentiality will be made by the organisation, not the individual Advisor.
- The Advisor will keep careful notes of any incidents, and all action taken should be recorded in the relevant place for a supervision record.

We will ensure that all our staff/volunteers are trained and competent to receive confidential information and deal with the issues that are raised. Our induction and regular training will include familiarisation with the Confidentiality Policy.

Records of counselling sessions will be identified only by first name and/or the client's allocated code and will be stored in a locked cabinet.