

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

A Confidentiality Policy is a comprehensive and realistic policy referred to in our general literature, our constitution, and our codes of practice and conduct. It is important because it encourages service users to be open and honest. It also protects volunteers who may feel concerned about working for an organisation such as ours if they do not wish their sexuality to be common knowledge.

1. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard will respect the right to privacy of both service users and volunteers. Carrey Friend Lesbian and Gay Switchboard and its volunteers recognise that sexuality and issues relating to it can be intensely personal and they respect the need of individuals to feel safe when discussing sexuality and issues relating to it with any volunteer.
2. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard and its volunteers acknowledge that to support each other and to learn from service users and the questions they present it will, on occasion, be necessary to discuss service users and their problems. Such discussion must be limited to closed meetings at which only full members only of Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard are present. Gossip between members about service users is strictly prohibited.
3. Only the Convenor or in his absence the Management Committee or a member appointed by the Management Committee for that purpose as press or publicity officer, can offer any opinion or comment on behalf of the group to the press and no such opinion or comment shall deal with the specifics of any service user.
4. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard recognises the right of any volunteer or service user to opt to be anonymous in their dealings with the group and will allocate assumed names which are respected and adhered to in all possible circumstances.
5. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard reserves the right to hold necessary contact details in respect of all volunteers and in respect of a service user if they reveal such information. This information will be kept completely confidential. In the case of volunteers a volunteer list will be prepared by the group and will be held by each group member. It will be the responsibility of each group member to ensure that such list is not released to any third party. As far as service users are concerned, if they ask about confidentiality, they will be assured that the call is confidential to the volunteer taking the call and the group, however, no volunteer is either obliged or entitled to take confidences on the basis that they will not be passed on to anybody.
6. No details of service users or volunteers will be given or sold to any other party by Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard or its volunteers.
7. The Management Committee of Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard will keep themselves informed of current Data Protection legislation and notify as a user of Data with the Data Protection Registrar as legally necessary or advisable so to do.

8. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard volunteers will take all appropriate steps to ensure that in the event of illegal entry or burglary that contact and personal details are protected by being well hidden.

9. Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard will ensure that confidentiality and the implications of not maintaining confidentiality is discussed with all volunteers at the time of recruitment and is incorporated in to initial training and the ongoing training policy.

10. With the agreement of the Convenor or in his absence the Management Committee, confidentiality may be waived under certain circumstances. Such as where a life is at risk or where the welfare of a child is at risk or where there is a police investigation taking place.

11. No volunteers should release information to the Police without the consent of either the Convenor or in his absence the Management Committee, which consent will be given after taking legal advice and if appropriate a Manx Advocate will be allocated to the volunteer to assist them in their dealings with the police.

12. All volunteers will sign a copy of the Confidentiality Policy and have a copy of it given to them so as to impress upon each of them the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

13. In the case of conflict between this Confidentiality Policy Statement and the Constitution of Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard the Constitution shall prevail.

14. Complaints. In all the cases where there is a breach of confidentiality this should be immediately referred to the Convenor or the Management Committee under the Complaints/Grievance Policy in place.

Carrey Friend Isle of Man Lesbian and Gay Switchboard reserves the right to anonymise and fictionalise service user contacts and the information and support given and post on the Forums under the Agony section