

BCAN Homeless Forum Confidentiality Policy

BCAN Forum members will keep all information about their clients confidential unless:

a) It is in the client's interests to pass information on, for example to gain access to other services or accommodation, or

b) The member believes someone is at risk of serious harm or has a legal obligation to pass the information on.

1. Where it is in a client's interests to provide personal information to other agencies, for example to access other services or accommodation, wherever possible we will involve the client in this process and do it with their consent.
2. BCAN Forum members will ensure that sensitive information about their clients is managed appropriately and stored securely.
3. Where it is relevant and appropriate to do so, the approach taken by the BCAN Forum on information sharing should be explained to their clients.
4. When BCAN Forum members are asked to provide information by another agency they will only do so only in accordance with this Policy or the legal requirements of any other organisation by which the members may be legally bound.
5. Adherence to this Policy will be monitored and any breaches of confidentiality must be reported to the next meeting of the BCAN Forum.
6. Information used for the purposes of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the work of the BCAN Forum or its members will not identify individual clients.
7. Minutes of meetings and other publicly available information will be anonymised.

8. BCAN Forum members are entitled to seek to protect their clients and the staff and volunteers in their organisations from danger. If a client threatens or appears likely to physically or psychologically harm another person, or where unwanted acts of a sexual and/or violent nature have occurred, this information may be shared with the police and any other agencies which interact with that client, for the purpose of the prevention of harm.

9. When a client discloses information relating to criminal acts or physical danger or damage to a BCAN Forum member, this information may be shared with the police and any other agencies which interact with that client, for the purpose of the prevention of harm.

10. Where a client is in need of medical treatment e.g. due to self-harm, a suicide attempt, physical harm, uncontrolled behaviour or ongoing risk linked to emotional distress, expert or medical services may be sought and information may be shared with the appropriate medical personnel even if the client does not give consent.

11. If a client's family makes contact with a BCAN Forum member we will explain our Confidentiality Policy to them, offer to pass on a message to the client if we see them, and encourage the client to phone home.

12. Where there is evidence that there are major concerns about a client's wellbeing, for example they have been reported missing and a police search is underway, it is permissible to disclose the client's whereabouts to the police.

Multiple arrangements

13. Where BCAN Forum members deliver services within another organization which has its own requirements regarding disclosure or sharing of information, and where those requirements are legal and binding on the member (for example under a contract with an employer) BCAN understands that those arrangements may take precedence over this Policy.

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