##### NB This template is intended for front-line services (as opposed to infrastructure organisations) but needs to be tailored to the specific circumstances of each organisation. It offers a framework for discussion and planning, identifying some of the areas you may need to consider. There may be other areas specific to your type of work.

# ANYORG: Confidentiality Policy

##### Status, e.g. approved by Management Committee [date]; to be reviewed [date]

#### Introductory statement

We are committed to providing a confidential service in all aspects of our work. We believe that people accessing our services deserve the right to confidentiality to protect their interests and to safeguard our organisation.

The purpose of this policy document is to establish a clear and agreed understanding of what confidentiality means within our organisation, to encourage uniformity and to ensure users of our services know what they can expect from us.

This policy details the personal behaviour expected of staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors and continues to apply after their service or involvement with us has ended. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

#### Why information is held

Most of the information we hold relates to [service users, volunteers, employees, Board members or services which support or fund our work]. We keep personal information to enable us to understand the needs of those people in order to [support them in the best possible way and make the best possible use of what they have to offer].

We keep information such as age, ethnicity and disability for use in anonymised form for the purposes of assessing ourselves as an equal opportunities organisation and also for reporting back to funders.

#### General principles

1. We recognise that we will gain information about individuals and organisations during the course of our work. In most cases such information will not be stated as confidential and we may have to exercise common sense and discretion in identifying whether information is expected to be confidential.
2. If in doubt, seek advice from your line manager. Information, unless it is purely personal to you, can and should be shared with your line manager in order to discuss issues and seek advice.
3. The following behaviours are clearly inappropriate and must be avoided at all times:

* exchanging personal information or comments (gossip) about individuals with whom we have a professional relationship
* discussing a person’s sexuality (e.g. ‘outing’ a gay person) without their prior consent
* discussing a person’s gender identity (i.e. if they do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth) without their prior consent
* talking about individuals connected to work in a social setting
* disclosure to anyone, other than one’s line manager, any information considered sensitive, personal, financial or private without the knowledge or consent of the individual

#### Potential disclosures

If any of us has reason to believe an illegal act may have taken place, or that a user of any of our services may be at risk of harming themselves or others, this must be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Chief Executive, who will report it to the appropriate authorities.

Where we are required or deem it necessary to make any such disclosure, the individual concerned will be informed of this, unless there is a specific and compelling legal reason not to inform them, for example for reasons of safeguarding. We recognise that there is a legal duty to disclose some information in specific situations, e.g.:

* safeguarding of children and adults at risk
* drug trafficking, money laundering or acts of terrorism

#### Other relevant policies and guidance

This policy is intended to be concise and to dovetail with, rather than duplicating, a number of other key policies, which means that some of the relevant detail of required practice will be found elsewhere. This policy must therefore always be read in conjunction with these other policies, specifically:

* Data Protection
* Criminal Records and Rehabilitation of Offenders
* Safeguarding
* Whistle blowing
* Record-keeping

#### Breach of confidentiality

Any accessing of unauthorised files or other breaching of confidentially (including by ex-employees) may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Employees who are dissatisfied with the conduct or actions of colleagues or their employer should raise this with their line manager using the grievance procedure, and not discuss the matter outside the organisation other than in order to obtain relevant advice. Others in this situation (volunteers, service users, Board members) should use our Complaints Procedure.

#### Monitoring

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:

* recording all complaints about breaches of confidentiality, and regularly reviewing these in management team.
* reviewing all breaches or possible breaches of confidentiality directly with the persons involved

#### Declaration of confidentiality

I have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy and all the related policies referred to above and I agree to conform with the requirements as set out.

Signed ……………………………………………………….

Name ……………………………………………………….

Date ……………………………………………………….

**Confidentiality agreement for accessing AnyOrg systems**

All information that:

1. is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of you accessing AnyOrg information systems, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence
2. relates particularly to our business, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
3. has not been made public by, or with our authority, shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time disclose such information to any person without our written consent

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information

You are required to comply with AnyOrg policies and procedures on user confidentiality and data protection

Signed ……………………………………………………….

Name ……………………………………………………….

Date ……………………………………………………….

Updated: May 2020