

RAIS Lancaster confidentiality policy and agreement.

Policy Statement

Confidentiality is central to our work supporting asylum seekers and refugees. It is essential that all those using RAIS's services have absolute confidence in our confidentiality arrangements. We always respect our clients' privacy and regard any information they give us as strictly given in confidence unless we have their explicit, written permission to share details with other appropriate individuals or organisations.

Through induction, training and ongoing coaching we ensure that all trustees, staff and volunteers involved in delivering our services understand these principles and are committed to protecting them. Any breach of confidentiality is treated extremely seriously.

We require all trustees, staff and volunteers associated with RAIS to sign and adhere to our Confidentiality Agreement (see below) before commencing any role within the organisation.

We also comply with the Home Office requirements for confidentiality in respect of asylum seekers who are regarded as vulnerable adults. We apply the same level of confidentiality to our work with refugees.

Confidentiality extends to information about volunteers, trustees and staff; and to sensitive information about the Charity itself.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy and our Data Protection Policy.

A. Compliance

RAIS complies with the Home Office requirements for confidentiality in respect of asylum seekers who are regarded as vulnerable adults. We apply the same level of confidentiality to our work with refugees.

The requirements are as follows.

1. We do not reveal full names addresses in the UK or any other personal details by any means, verbally, electronically or in writing to persons who are not authorised to have this information.
2. Only authorised persons who are members of RAIS can access confidential information relating to an individual asylum seeker or refugee, and referrals to other organisation on their behalf can only be made with that individual's written permission.
3. We do not put any such information on any private or public notice board or on any social media platform.
4. We do not reveal full names and contact details in email and other electronic messaging exchanges.
5. We do not discuss our clients with anyone outside our organisation without the client's written permission.
6. We provide evidence of such written permission in the form of a signed registration documents in referrals to all outside organizations and individuals.

B. Protocols

Managing asylum seeker and refugee confidentiality:

- i. We refer to clients by their first name only or first name and family name initial in email and other electronic correspondence.
- ii. Wherever possible we use generalised titles for emails which do not reveal our clients' identity e.g., 'housing issue' or 'GP appointment request'.
- iii. We do not discuss our clients in informal settings (e.g., with friends and family) outside the organisation.
- iv. We ensure that anyone who translates for our clients is doing it with their consent and that they feel confident that their privacy will be respected.
- v. We will follow agreed protocols as above for information sharing with other voluntary and statutory organisations with whom we may share information.

Managing trustee, staff and volunteer confidentiality:

- i. No-one who works or volunteers with RAIS should ever feel that they are the subject of gossip, so it is important that we do not share personal information about one another outside RAIS or disclose anything that has been told to us in confidence to anyone else in the organisation. This does not apply if there is any kind of safeguarding concern, in which case the issue must be raised with the line manager or safeguarding officer.
- ii. Staff have the expectation of confidentiality within their 121s with their line manager (a nominated trustee), and personal information should not be shared with other trustees. Progress relating to work objectives, issues arising from their operational role can be shared with the trustees, but these are also potentially sensitive and will not be shared outside of the trustee body.

Managing organisational confidentiality

- i. From time to time volunteers, staff and in particular trustees may be privy to sensitive information about the work or status of the Charity itself, and such information must remain within the organisation.
- ii. Much of any Charity's work is a matter of public record (eg annual return to the Charity Commission, annual accounts and the Trustees' annual report) but some information may be sensitive and should not be disclosed. Examples may include the status of funding applications, internal processes such as investigations, complaints or disciplinaries, the management of safeguarding concerns, the preparation of partnership arrangements etc. Please check with your line manager if you have any questions about this.

C. Privacy

With regard to all our clients, both asylum seekers and refugees, and our staff and volunteers, we comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Please view our Data Protection Policy.

D. Safeguarding

It is *not* a breach of confidentiality for a volunteer or member of staff to discuss the progress of a case with their line manager, for the purposes of providing the most effective service.

It is *not* a breach of confidentiality for a volunteer or member of staff to raise any concern they may have about a person's safety or wellbeing with the line manager; indeed it is essential that they do so. Please view our Safeguarding Policy for more information.


E. Implementation

- All new trustees, staff and volunteers are provided with this policy, and asked to sign the attached confidentiality agreement.
- Induction training covers the importance of confidentiality for our clients, and for each other
- Ongoing coaching / supervision reinforces how records are kept and to use examples to illustrate how confidentiality is managed.
- Any breach of confidentiality is taken extremely seriously, and may lead to disciplinary action (staff) or being asked to leave the organisation (volunteers including trustees)

This policy was adopted on 13/12/21

This policy is due for review on 13/12/24

Signed



Dr Elizabeth Hare
Chair RAIS Lancaster

Date 13.12.21.