

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Information Sharing Policy

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Cross Reference	Confidentiality Policy, Information Commissioners Office

Purpose of this document

The best interests of the children/young people (CYP) will always be Aspired Futures (AF) primary concern when considering sharing information with other agencies. This may sometimes have to override the family's consent to share information and breach confidentiality if it is considered necessary for child protection when information will be shared with the appropriate authority.

Through sharing information in an open and responsible way AF will contribute to ensuring CYP supported have the best start in life.

Details of Policy

Support for CYP

AF supports the principles of openness and honesty with CYP and their families. The confidentiality policy will be discussed with families as part of the induction to AF support and available on the website for their future referral.

AF abides by the golden rules underpinning information sharing and will:

- Explain to CYP and/or parents/carers as part of the induction process how information will be shared and seek their agreement – the only exception being where there is a risk of significant harm to a CYP or serious harm to an adult
- Consider the safety and welfare of the CYP and/or parent/carer (the overriding consideration) when making decisions about sharing information
- Where possible respect the wishes of CYP and parent/carer
- Seek advice if in doubt from a line manager or the Director of Services
- Ensure that the information shared is necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, is shared only with those who need to see it, is accurate and up to date and is shared securely
- Record the reasons for decisions to share or not share information.

Involving CYP in decisions to share information

- CYP mature enough (normally considered to be 12 or over), will be involved in making decisions to share information about them.
- The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provides the information on involving CYP in decisions to share information which AF follow (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-6-rights/subject-access-request/> - What about requests for information about children?)

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Recording information

- AF practice will be to record only information which is relevant to the support for the CYP. The records kept will have a clear purpose which is to enable appropriate support to be provided for the CYP and monitor progress.
- Records will be maintained securely on the CYP's electronic personal file in accordance with AF retention periods and in line with the Data Protection Act. Individuals will have right of access to information AF holds about them and be aware who else may have access to the information.
- Child safety and welfare concerns will be recorded by a designated senior member of staff on the AF Record of Concern Form, in detail, accurately, factually and without any personal interpretation being imposed on events. Details recorded are;
 - Dates, times, locations and the individuals present
 - What a volunteer or staff member sees and or hears personally in relation to any specific incident which causes concern
 - Conversations with CYP, parents and professionals about possible abuse
 - Other relevant information such as direct observation of a child/young person and parents/carers interaction and functions, which can be substantiated and justified in relation to the incident
 - Action to be taken by AF
 - The Record of Concern Form(s) will be signed and dated by the designated Senior Member of staff and shared with the AF Strategic Lead and kept in chronological order in a sub-section of the CYP's electronic file.

Training and Induction

The training and induction for all trustees, staff and volunteers will include information on their responsibilities with regard to sharing information and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This will include signed and dated confirmation of their understanding and acceptance of the AF Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding, Data Protection, Confidentiality and Information Sharing policies.

Liaising with other agencies

AF is committed to maintaining effective communication with other key agencies and will share information according to these principles in order to contribute to the best support available for CYP and their parents/carers.

Referrers

Referrers will be informed when AF support starts, the nature of that support and when support ends. With the CYP and/or parent/carers consent they may be informed of any changes in the nature of support as the relationship with AF progresses.

Multi-agency meetings

AF staff will only attend multi-agency meetings with the CYP and parents/carers knowledge and consent, unless there are concerns for the safety or welfare. They will discuss what information will be shared. It is usual for CYP and or parent/carers to attend these meetings too.

Commissioners of Services

- Evidence of positive outcomes for CYP and their parents/carers is essential to underpin AF funding applications and for accountability purposes. AF will retain statistical records of their support CYP to meet these requirements.

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- Currently there is a greater emphasis on joined up or integrated working and information sharing is seen as an essential part of this collaborative approach. Through working together, positive outcomes may be recognised and acknowledged. In addition, given that AF often supports CYP and parents/carers who have little or no contact with other agencies we are committed to the further development of monitoring and evaluation systems to indicate the difference Aspired Futures support makes.

OFSTED Inspections

Records will be available for OFSTED inspection purposes. AF will first contact all relevant parents/carers to notify them of the intended inspection and will ensure they all receive a copy of the inspection report.