



Your personal information

Confidentiality and how we use your information



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Your personal information

To make sure we respect your privacy and only share information with the right people, we have a 'Confidentiality Policy'. The policy is explained in this section.



Confidentiality and the law

There is a law called the '1998 Data Protection Act' that all organisations have to follow. Among other things, the law says that we must:

- collect and use information fairly and lawfully
- keep accurate information
- not keep information for longer than is needed.

What information do you have on record about me?

The only information we keep about you is what we need to know in order to provide you with support.

Before you start receiving support from us, we will have the information given to us on your 'referral form' and by the referral agency. We need this information to decide whether or not our support is right for you.

When you are receiving support from us, we have:

- general information about you, such as your contact details
- information in relation to your support plan and what happens at each support visit

- information from other organisations that will help us to give you support if you have agreed that we can have this information.

Where is the information kept?

Information is kept on a computer database called the 'Service User Module'. People need a password to be able to see information on the database. Information is also kept on paper. This is kept in a locked cabinet so that it is safe.

Who at MST can see my information?

Only people who need to see your personal information can see it. This is normally only your support worker and your support worker's team manager.

How long do you keep this information on record for?

We keep this information for 6 years. After this time, the information is destroyed.

Looking at your personal information

Can I see the information you have on record about me?

Yes. You have the right to see the information that we hold about you. You have the right to check that the information is right and not misleading.

Is there any information that I cannot see?

You can not see information about anyone else.

We can not show you any information given to us by someone else who has asked us to keep this private. However, we will ask that person for their permission to show it to you.

How long does it take to see my information?

If you ask to see your information, a meeting will be set up between you and an MST staff member (for example, your Support Worker) so you can look at it.

We will give you the information to look at as soon as possible. We try to do this within five working days. By law, we will show you this information no more than 40 days after receiving your request.

What happens if the information you hold about me is wrong?

If you disagree with the details we have recorded, you can ask us to make changes.

We will correct information that you can prove to be wrong or out-of-date. If we are not able to make the changes, we will explain why and you can have your comments placed on the file.

You also have the right to make a complaint or appeal about this using the MST 'Comment, Complaints and Compliments' process which is explained in this guide.

Will it cost me anything to see my personal information?

It usually costs £10 to see your personal information. However, it may cost less or cost nothing depending on what information you want to see.

Sharing your personal information with other organisations

As explained in the last section, we involve other care and support organisations in planning, running and reviewing your support package where appropriate.

Your support worker will only share information in relation to your support with these organisations.

Do you need my permission to pass on my information to another person or organisation?

Usually yes. You are normally asked to fill in a "Permission to Share Information" form when you first start getting support from us. On this form:

- you can say who you are happy for us to share information with
- you can add any extra information about who you do or do not want to see your information.

You can ask to fill in another form to change who we share your information with at any point.

The only situations where we may share information without asking for your permission beforehand are:

- Where there is a genuine fear for your safety, the safety of the staff or the safety of the general public
- Where we have a legal duty to do so – for example, if you are involved in any criminal activity

If this happens, it will be done in strict accordance with the law.

What happens when you want to share my information with another person or organisation?

Your Support Worker will explain:

- Why the information is needed by the other person or organisation
- Who will be able to see it and how it will be used
- What might happen if the information is not given to the person or organisation.
- How your information will be stored and for how long
- How you can see the information and how any mistakes can be corrected
- How your privacy will be protected

What happens if I do not agree that you can share my information with other organisations?

You have a choice as to who sees your information.

If you do not give us permission to share information with any organisations, we may not be able to meet your support needs. For this reason, we may have to withdraw our offer of support. However, we understand that you may be willing for us to share information with some organisations but not with others. There is a space on the 'Permission to Share Information' form for you to note which organisations you would not want us to share information with.