

Guidelines on Data Protection, Information Sharing and Safeguarding for Volunteers

Age UK Camden

Age UK Camden Group expects its volunteers and staff to represent the organisation in a competent, responsible, and professional manner. How we engage with the people we support, and how we protect their personal information, is a core responsibility in all volunteer and staff roles.

These guidelines address key principles within AUC Group's Information Governance, Confidentiality, Data Protection, and Safeguarding Policies.

As adults, individuals have a general right to independence, choice, and self-determination, including control over information about themselves.

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent appropriate information sharing. Instead, they provide a legal framework to ensure that personal information is shared lawfully, fairly, proportionately, and securely.

Age UK Camden Group aims to be open and transparent with people from the outset about why, what, how, and with whom information may be shared, and seeks consent where appropriate.

Consent and Lawful Information Sharing

- Clients using our services are asked to provide written consent to share personal information with external agencies where this is necessary to support them.
- Clients using our befriending services provide personal information to help us support them and are asked to consent to sharing relevant information with appropriate individuals, including volunteers.

Personal information should be shared with consent where appropriate. However, information may be shared without consent where there is a legal duty, safeguarding concern, or where it is necessary in the public interest or to protect someone's vital interests (see Safeguarding section).

Information may be processed under lawful bases including legal obligation, legitimate interests, safeguarding duties, and vital interests, in accordance with UK GDPR.

Volunteers must not promise absolute confidentiality. If information relates to risk, harm, abuse, neglect, crime, or safeguarding, it must be reported immediately no later than 24 hours to the relevant manager or Data Protection Lead.

Secure Sharing and Storage of Information

Information about the people we support must be handled securely. Volunteers and staff must ensure that:

- Information shared is necessary and proportionate to the purpose
- Information is shared only with those who need to know
- Information is accurate and up to date
- Information is shared in a timely manner
- Information is shared and stored securely

Any personal data recorded or stored must be managed in line with AUC Group's Data Protection and Records Retention Policies.

Any **actual** or suspected data breach (including loss, unauthorised access, accidental disclosure, or cyber incidents) must be reported immediately to the relevant manager or Data Protection Lead.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all volunteers. Service-specific subheadings highlight additional requirements relevant to particular roles.

I. All Volunteers

- Do not share personal information such as phone numbers or email addresses with clients.
- When communicating via email, refer to clients only by initials or CLOG number (if available). Do not include names, phone numbers, addresses, or other identifying details.
- Do not share images or personal information about clients on personal social media pages unless the content has been officially published **by** Age UK Camden Group.
- If you use a personal device to communicate with Age UK Camden Group about a client, report immediately if your device is lost, stolen, hacked, or compromised.
- Volunteers must not store client records or personal data outside approved systems.

II. Befrienders / Home Visiting Befrienders

Volunteers using personal phones or devices to communicate with Key Persons or clients must:

- Password protect their devices
- Delete sent and received messages containing client-related information
- Use client initials only, with no personally identifying information
- Delete call, email, and text history related to clients
- Store contact details in a way that only the volunteer can identify the individual.

III. Information & Advice / Administration and Office Support

- Record client details, actions, and information using the Charity Log database (CLOG) or report to your Key Person
- Training on CLOG is provided
- Record information only as instructed by your Key Person
- Log off or lock your computer when leaving your desk unattended
- Secure confidential paperwork when not in use
- Ensure all information is securely stored at the end of the day
- Do not leave confidential information unattended at photocopiers or fax machines
- Follow team work practices as directed by your Key Person

IV. Counsellors

- Store client contact details so that only you can identify the individual
- Store assessment/session notes separately from identifying details
- Do not photocopy or remove documents from the office that reveal client identity

V. Digital Support service

- Do not use personal email addresses in learning environments
- Any printed documents left behind by participants must be securely stored or shredded

VI. Day Care Centre

- Do not discuss a client's personal information with other clients
- Discuss any concerns about a client only with staff members
- Do not visit clients in their homes unless this is explicitly part of your role or advised by your Key Person

All adults have a general right to independence, choice, and control over their personal information. However, information may be shared without consent where necessary to protect an adult at risk, prevent harm, or meet legal duties under safeguarding law (including the Care Act 2014).

A safeguarding concern may be raised without consent where:

- A crime is suspected or has been committed
- An adult is at risk of serious harm
- Other adults or children may be harmed
- Abuse has occurred in a setting where there is a duty of care
- The alleged perpetrator is a staff member, volunteer, consultant or an agency staff
- The person lacks mental capacity, and action is in their best interests
- A person is being coerced, intimidated, or unduly influenced
- It is necessary to prevent crime
- It is in a person's vital interests (e.g., life-threatening risk)

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Volunteers cannot give personal guarantees of confidentiality
- Volunteers must report safeguarding concerns immediately, usually to their Key Person in the first instance
- It is good practice to seek consent where safe to do so
- Where appropriate, and where it does not increase risk, volunteers should inform clients if their information needs to be shared without consent

Support and Clarification

Information essential to specific services is outlined under relevant headings. Volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with all guidelines.

If volunteers are unsure or need clarification, they should speak to their Key Person or the HR department.

Volunteer Declaration

I have read and understood these guidelines and agree to follow them while volunteering with Age UK Camden Group. I understand that failure to follow these guidelines may result in withdrawal of volunteering duties.

Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____

Your local independent charity
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Camden since 1965



Date: _____