

Privacy Policy (General)

Approved by Board 3 March 2015

Policy Statement

The Service is committed to protecting and upholding the right to privacy of clients, staff, volunteers, Board members and representatives of agencies we deal with. In particular the Service is committed to protecting and upholding the rights of our clients to privacy in the way we collect, store and use information about them, their needs and the services we provide to them.

The Service requires staff, volunteers and Board members to be consistent and careful in the way they manage what is written and said about individuals and how they decide who can see or hear this information.

The Service is subject to *Federal Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (Privacy Act) (as per funding contracts). The Service will follow the guidelines of the *National Privacy Principles* in its information management practices.

The term “personal information” has the meaning given to it in the Privacy Act. In general terms, it is any information that can be used to personally identify an individual. This may include name, address, telephone number, email address and profession or occupation. If the information collected personally identifies an individual, or they are reasonably identifiable from it, the information will be considered personal information.

The term “sensitive information” is a subset of personal information and is given a higher level of protection. In this policy, the term “sensitive information” has the meaning given to it in the Privacy Act.

The Service will ensure that:

- it meets its legal and ethical obligations as an employer and service provider in relation to protecting the privacy of clients and organisational personnel.
- clients are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy.
- clients and organisational personnel are provided with privacy when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature.
- all staff, Board members and volunteers understand what is required in meeting these obligations.

The Service collects personal information so that we can provide advocacy services and the best possible quality of customer service.

We collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information for the following purposes:

- to provide services and to send communications;
- to answer enquiries and provide information or advice about our services;
- for the administrative, planning, quality control and research purposes;
- to update our records and keep individual contact details up to date;
- to process and respond to any complaint; and

- to comply with any law, rule, regulation, lawful and binding determination, decision or direction of a regulator, or in co-operation with any governmental authority of any country.

Personal information will not be shared, sold, rented or disclosed other than as described in this Privacy Policy.

This policy will apply to all records, whether hard copy or electronic, containing personal information about individuals, and to interviews or discussions of a sensitive personal nature.

Procedure

Dealing with personal information

In dealing with personal information, the Service's staff will:

- ensure privacy for clients, staff, volunteers or Board members when they are being interviewed or discussing matters of a personal or sensitive nature
- only collect and store personal information that is necessary for the functioning of the organisation and its activities
- use fair and lawful ways to collect personal information
- collect personal information only by consent from an individual
- ensure that people know what sort of personal information is held, what purposes it is held for and how it is collected, used, disclosed and who will have access to it
- ensure that personal information collected or disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date, and provide access to any individual to review information or correct wrong information about themselves
- take reasonable steps to protect all personal information from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure
- destroy or permanently de-identify personal information no longer needed and/or after legal requirements for retaining documents have expired.

Responsibilities for managing privacy

All staff are responsible for the management of personal information to which they have access, and in the conduct of research, consultation or advocacy work.

CEO is responsible for content in ALA or DA, publications, communications and web site, the Principal Solicitor is responsible for content in MNCCLC, publications, communications and web site and both must ensure the following:

- appropriate consent is obtained for the inclusion of any personal information about any individual including the Service's personnel
- information being provided by other agencies or external individuals conforms to privacy principles
- that the website/s does not collect personal information from the public through their visit to the website/s.

CEO is responsible for safeguarding personal information relating to the Service's staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors and the Service's members.

The Privacy Contact Officer for ALA and DANSW:

The Privacy Contact Officer will be the CEO. The CEO will be responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Privacy Policy and administrative procedures for handling personal information

- ensuring that clients and other relevant individuals are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy
- handling any queries or complaint about a privacy issue
- complying with the Service's information barriers policy

The Privacy Contact Officer for MNCCLC:

The Privacy Contact Officer will be the Principal Solicitor. The Principal Solicitor will be responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Privacy Policy and administrative procedures for handling personal information
- ensuring that clients and other relevant individuals are provided with information about their rights regarding privacy
- handling any queries or complaint about a privacy issue
- complying with the Service's information barriers policy

Privacy information for clients

At initial contact or through DA's or MNCCLC's client handbook clients will be informed about what information is being collected, how their privacy will be protected and their rights in relation to this information.

Privacy for interviews and personal discussions

To ensure privacy for clients or staff when discussing sensitive or personal matters, the Service will:

- ensure that such matters are only discussed in private environment, the only exceptions to this will be special arrangements in circumstances where high risk safety issues are identified in a client risk assessment.

Participants in research projects

People being invited to participate in a research project must be:

- given a choice about participating or not
- given the right to withdraw at any time
- informed about the purpose of the research project, the information to be collected, and how information they provide will be used.