



## FRIENDS of the FAMILY WINCHESTER

### CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY – USERS OF OUR SERVICES

#### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It is our intention to respect and safeguard the privacy of all family members (parents, guardians and children) who are users of any Friends of the Family service.

#### **AIM**

Friends of the Family aims to ensure that all users of its services can share information in confidence and be assured that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of an individual child, parent/guardian or their family.

#### **METHOD**

##### **Recording personal information**

We keep three kinds of records on parents, children and families who are using the services of Friends of the Family. The type of records kept will vary depending on the exact services that any individual or family are engaged with.

##### 1. Sessional records

- These include: observations of adults, such as individual concerns and achievements; and observations of children, including notes on their development and achievement.
- Adult sessional records are kept on computer and can be accessed by the individual adult concerned. Child sessional records are also kept on computer and can be accessed by, and contributed to, by staff, volunteers and the child's parents.

##### 2. Personal records

- These include: referral forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the individual (child or adult) or family from other agencies, an ongoing record of any relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff or volunteers on any confidential matter involving the individual (child or adult) or family, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- These confidential records are either stored in a lockable cabinet or on a password protected computer or on the CRM system and are kept secure by the managers of each service, in the Friends of the Family office.

### 3. Supervision records

- Supervision is given to volunteers involved in some areas of our work; primarily our Befriending service.
- The Befriending Manager records conversations with volunteers, in relation to the family and child they are working with, through regular telephone/email supervision. These records may include achievements and individual concerns identified by either family members or the volunteer.
- These records are stored securely within a family and child's file, by the Befriending Manager, either in a lockable cabinet or on a password protected computer or on the CRM system in the Friends of the Family office.

### **Managing personal information**

- Users of our services have access – in accordance with the Data Protection Act and data protection regulations currently in force – to any records and files regarding themselves and their own children, but do not have access to information about any other adult or child using our service.
- Staff and volunteers will not discuss personal information with anyone outside of Friends of the Family, except where:
  - it affects the planning for a child's needs who is using our services, and therefore sharing personal information given by parents with other members of staff is deemed necessary,
  - there are concerns for the safety or wellbeing of adults or children in the family.
- No information will be given to a third party, without discussion with, and consent from, the individual adult concerned or a parent (of a child engaged in our services), except in situations of extreme concern for the safety or wellbeing of any adult or child. This would be an exceptional circumstance and, where applicable, done so in accordance with our *Child Protection Policy*. A copy of any communication with a third party will be given to the adult concerned, or parent of the child.
- Staff and volunteer induction and ongoing training include an awareness of the prime importance of confidentiality.
- Students in training for recognised qualifications and working with or on behalf of Friends of the Family, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to abide by it.
- Trustees of Friends of the Family respect any confidential information that they are party to about individual parents, children or their families.

## Access to personal records

Users of our service may request access to any records held on file regarding them, their child(ren) and family following the procedure in Appendix 1

All the undertakings outlined in Appendix 1 are subject to the paramount commitment of Friends of the Family to the safety and wellbeing of the individual and/or child concerned (Please refer to our *Child Protection Policy*).

## Declarations of confidentiality

### By the organisation

Users of our service can be reassured that all staff, trustees and volunteers at Friends of Family are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all privileged information to which they may be exposed whilst working in the organisation:

- Those who work for us are asked to read and sign Friends of the Family's Confidentiality Declaration (Appendix 2). Failure to maintain confidentiality outside the organisation may result in the termination of an individual's relationship with Friends of the Family.
- And, in accordance with the General Protection Data Regulations (effective 25 May 2018), all adult users of our service are asked to read and sign the Friends of the Family *Privacy and Keeping in Touch* declaration (Appendix 3).

### By service users

Users of our service are also responsible for maintaining confidentiality of any privileged information to which they may be exposed whilst using any service within Friends of the Family.

- Mothers receiving group therapy as part of our work with Mums and young children, are asked to sign a Group Confidentiality Contract agreement (Appendix 4).

Policy reviewed and approved at Friends of the Family Trustee Meeting on 27/05/2021

Signed   
Chair of Trustees

Review Date: May 2023

## APPENDIX 1 – ACCESS TO RECORDS

- Any request by an adult to see their personal file must be made in writing to the manager of the primary service (lead manager) they are engaged with at Friends of the Family. Any request – from a parent or person with parental responsibility – to see a child's personal file must also be made in writing to the manager of the primary service the child is engaged with.
- The lead manager informs the Chair of Trustees and sends a written acknowledgement. Friends of the Family commits to providing access within 14 days, or giving reasons in writing for any delay.
- The lead manager and Chair of Trustees prepare the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on the file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including Children's Services, the Health Authority, Police, and Education Authority etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The lead manager and Chair of the Trustees go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
- What remains is the information recorded by Friends of the Family, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the lead manager, so that it can be explained.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against Friends of the Family or another (third party) agency.

## APPENDIX 2 - CONFIDENTIALITY DECLARATION

Friends of the Family is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information, and has practices and procedures in place to reflect this.

All staff, trustees and volunteers are required to respect and safeguard the privacy of all family members (parents, guardians and children) who are users of any Friends of the Family service, in line with our policy, *Confidentiality Policy – Users of our Service*

All staff, trustees and volunteers must declare they accept our confidentiality policy.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in the termination of an individual's relationship with Friends of the Family.

### The declaration:

- I have read and understood the *Confidentiality Policy – Users of our Service* and agree to abide by this policy.
- I will maintain the confidentiality of any individual or family's personal, sensitive or confidential information.
- I will only discuss these details with staff members, trustees and volunteers if it is appropriate or necessary to do so within my role at Friends of the Family.
- I will not divulge the names or other details of any families engaged with Friends of the Family to people outside the organisation (other than in the exceptional circumstances outlined in the confidentiality policy).

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 3 - PRIVACY AND KEEPING IN TOUCH FORM**



**Privacy and Keeping in Touch**

In accordance with the General Protection Data Regulations effective 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018

I consent for Friends of the Family Winchester Ltd to hold my personal information. Please tick all the box(es) below to tell us the ways you would prefer to hear from us

- Yes please, I would like to receive communication by email
- Yes please I would like to receive communication by telephone
- Yes please I would like to receive communication by mobile (text message)
- Yes please I would like to receive communication by post

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Friends of the Family Winchester Ltd  
16 Colebrook Street  
Winchester  
SO23 9LH

#### **APPENDIX 4 - GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY CONTRACT**

The aim of this contract is to ensure that members of the group feel able to share personal experiences and concerns in an atmosphere of safety and trust, without judgement or needing to be 'fixed', which is essential to our personal development and to the success of the group.

It is also to make sure that people outside the group do not misunderstand how we work, or why families choose to work with us.

General information about Friends of the Family (based on our leaflets etc) can be shared with other people. It is up to individual members whether to tell people of their own membership of the group, and to share their own experiences of what they have learned with their family and friends.

In order to respect the right of all group members to safety and confidentiality, we agree that in any of the above discussions about Friends of the Family, we will not discuss personal information about any other group member. This means that we do not disclose the names, addresses or any other identifying information about anyone else in the group. This applies to all types of communication outside the group including conversations, texting, e-mails and particularly internet chat rooms, including Facebook.

If a group member has anxieties or complaints about Friends of the Family, these should be raised in the group, or individually with the Project Leader/Play Leader, or with the Chair of Trustees, who is Vivienne Wheeler. You can write to Viv at:

Friends of the Family, 16 Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LH and mark the envelope 'Personal and Confidential'

At Friends of the Family we take confidentiality very seriously. In order to join the group and remain a group member, everyone must agree to sign up to this confidentiality contract.

I agree with these group rules about confidentiality.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by:

Colette Dunford. Project Leader Mums and Young Children.

Date: