

SAASSBMK DOCUMENT IDENTITY			
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Confidentiality Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes' (SAASSBMK) approach to confidentiality and note taking.

SAASSBMK takes confidentiality very seriously. It is the very ethos of SAASSBMK, being a fundamental part of creating a relationship of trust between the service users and volunteers and staff members, as well as maintaining good practice.

All members of staff, volunteers and trustees must maintain strict confidentiality regarding any information about anyone connected to SAASSBMK. This means that no information should be shared with a third party outside SAASSBMK without written authorisation by the relevant person (except in circumstances set out in section below).

All service users of SAASSBMK have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of their gender, race, religion, sexuality, or disability.

All service users are allocated a service user code at the point of entry into the organisation that is used to identify them confidentially. This code is used to identify personal information held on all service users. Basic personal details are required from all service users to access support and these details need to be recorded. All personal information will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information on how we look after your data can be found in our Data Protection GDPR and Privacy Policy: <https://saassbmk.org.uk/about-us/policies-and-procedures/>

A means of contacting the service user is needed in case of a change of arrangements but any call made by SAASSBMK are discreet and we do not mention SAASSBMK unless prior permission has been sought.

Brief notes of support sessions will be made by the volunteer or staff member to assist with supervision, service planning and review. These notes will be kept in accordance with the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) guidelines.

The notes will be concise and written in such a way as so not to compromise any police investigation, criminal court case or civil action. Training to all volunteers and staff will be provided on this subject.

Confidentiality within SAASSBMK

Confidentiality is between the service user and SAASSBMK rather than a service user and an individual member of staff or volunteer.

SAASSBMK recognises that relevant information concerning service users may need to be discussed internally during line manager meetings and group meetings. This will be done respectfully and on the understanding that the

information is maintained internally. SAASSBMK encourages volunteers and staff members to be transparent with the service users regarding the confidentiality policy.

SAASSBMK is aware that service user information may be given during external clinical supervision. If this happens, there should be no mention of the service users name, surname, and support details such as location and time etc.

The use of the anonymised experiences of service users may be powerful tools to use in training sessions or other events. However, great thought must be given to whether this would be ethical or appropriate and may only be done with the express permission of the service user. In seeking the consent of the service user, it is important that the implications are fully explored with them.

Referrals to other organisations

If it is decided that a service user would benefit by being referred to another organisation, then this will only be done in conjunction with the service user themselves.

If a service user asks to be referred to another organisation, the volunteer or staff member must obtain express permission from the service user about exactly what information may be shared as part of the referral.

Breaching Confidentiality

In most situations SAASSBMK does not break confidentiality however there are exceptions where this may be necessary. These are:

- When a child or adult at risk is at risk of harm through abuse or neglect (see our Safeguarding policies)
- If a service user discloses information about a terrorist plan, we are legally required to disclose to the Police.
- If a service user informs you of their decision to kill or seriously injure another person or themselves, this must be disclosed to the Police.
- If a service user talks of known ongoing abuse of a named child, we must encourage them to disclose, if they will not, we must do so.
- Where there is a court order or other legal requirements

If there are circumstances where it is considered appropriate to breach confidentiality, then the following steps should be taken:

- The volunteer or staff member should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately who will decide whether the situation warrants a breach of confidentiality and what information can be disclosed in accordance with relevant policies
- If the DSO cannot be contacted, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DLS) should be contacted
- If neither can be contacted and the staff or volunteer deems the situation an emergency, then the relevant emergency service should be contacted

- If the circumstances are not urgent then support from a Line Manager or clinical supervisor must be sought as soon as possible
- If it is agreed that confidentiality needs to be breached, the permission of the service user should be sought where possible and in circumstances permission is refused, the service user is at least informed of the disclosure. This should be done, where possible, before any disclosure.
- The volunteer or staff member should make accurate records of what was disclosed on the Disclosure Form and the DSL/DSO should keep a clear record of all subsequent discussions and agreed actions on the Database.
- Where possible the service user and volunteer or staff member will have a safeguarding meeting to discuss the need to breach confidentiality and the process

You can view our safeguarding policies here: <https://saassbmk.org.uk/about-us/policies-and-procedures/>

Urgency of Action

In cases where confidentiality may need to be breached but the DSO and DSL are not available, the volunteer or staff member should appropriately assess the situation and breach confidentiality based on the following guidelines:

- If the abuse is current and the person is at immediate risk
- If the abuse happened in the past and the child, young person or adult at risk is not at immediate risk than the matter although important may not be urgent unless there are siblings or another vulnerable person who can be at risk
- Sometimes the child or adult at risk may not be at risk but are very vulnerable, in which case the matter may be considered urgent
- If the service user or someone else is at immediate risk of harm

If the volunteer or staff member feels the circumstances meet any of the afore mentioned criteria and the situation cannot wait, then the appropriate emergency services should be contacted. The volunteer or staff member should keep an accurate record of all discussions, actions, and rationale for actions.