

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Huntingdon Area Money Advice (HAMA) believes that principles of confidentiality must be integrated across all aspects of its services and management. We believe our clients deserve the right to confidentiality in order to protect their interests and preserve the debt advice service. Therefore, no information regarding a service user will be given directly or indirectly to any third party external to the staff of the centre without the service user's prior consent.

The postal address, email address and contact telephone numbers of any HAMA volunteers are treated as confidential and will never be disclosed without express permission of the person involved. Personal information about a colleague within HAMA should not be discussed with other colleagues or people outside of HAMA without permission of that colleague.

We recognise that all clients should be able to access our services in confidence and that as far as possible no other person other than HAMA volunteers should ever know that they have used our service without their consent. Clients need to feel secure in using the service in a confidential manner and therefore, where required, they will be afforded confidential interview space and we will ensure that as far as possible, there is no inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

All advisers will ensure that where any action is agreed to be taken by HAMA on behalf of a client that the client will firstly sign an authorisation form which will be kept in the client's file. All case records will be kept securely, as will all information relating to service users such as notebooks, correspondence, calculation sheets and any other source of information. All electronic records will be suitably password protected.

All advisers will check with clients what methods of contact are acceptable such as phoning at home or work, email and personal visitation, before any contact is made in these ways.

Statistics gathered to monitor the service for the purposes of identifying any policy issues and to support funding applications will be produced in anonymous form to prevent identification of individual users.

HAMA acknowledges that on rare occasions it may be necessary to break the basic rules of confidentiality. These may be defined broadly as situations where the safety, rights and liberties of other people or the person giving information may be seriously at risk. Also, legal reports may have to be made regardless of the consent of the person involved, for example where HAMA volunteers become aware of risk to a child or of potential terrorist activity. Decisions that are made, and the reasons for them, will be properly recorded.

When confidential information is divulged without consent the individual concerned will be, wherever possible, informed and an explanation of the action given, except where it might result in more harm to other people or when prohibited by law.

Any person, who feels that their confidentiality has been compromised, or who is concerned that inaccurate information is held about them, is encouraged to discuss the matter with a member of HAMA. If the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction, they are entitled to make use of the HAMA Complaints Procedure.

Approved by the HAMA Board of Trustees: 12th June 2018