



Nottingham Narrow Boat Project

Confidentially policy

1. General principles

1.1. Nottingham Narrow Boat Project recognises that colleagues (employees, volunteers, trustees, secondees and students) gain information about individuals and organisations during the course of their work or activities. In most cases such information will not be stated as confidential and colleagues may have to exercise common sense and discretion in identifying whether information is expected to be confidential. This policy aims to give guidance but if in doubt, seek advice from your line manager.

1.2. Colleagues can share information with their line manager in order to discuss issues and seek advice.

1.3. Colleagues will avoid exchanging personal information or comments about individuals with whom they have a professional relationship.

1.4. Talking about the private life of a colleague is always to be avoided, unless the colleague in question has instigated the conversation.

1.5. Colleagues will avoid talking about organisations or individuals in social settings.

1.6. Colleagues will not disclose to anyone, other than their line manager, any information considered sensitive, personal, financial or private without the knowledge or consent of the individual, or an officer, in the case of an organisation.

1.7. There may be circumstances where colleagues would want to discuss difficult situations with each other to gain a wider perspective on how to approach a problem. The organisation's consent must be sought before discussing the situation, unless the colleague is convinced beyond doubt that the organisation would not object to this. Alternatively, a discussion may take place with names or identifying information remaining confidential.

1.8. Where there is a legal duty on Nottingham Narrow Boat Project to disclose information, the person to whom the confidentiality is owed will be informed that disclosure has or will be made.

2. Why information is held

2.1. Most information held by Nottingham Narrow Boat Project relates to individuals, voluntary and community organisations, self-help groups, volunteers, students, employees, trustees or services which support or fund them.

2.2. Information is kept enabling Nottingham Narrow Boat Project colleagues to understand the history and activities of individuals or organisations in order to deliver the most appropriate services.

2.3. Information about students is given to the training organisation and the college, but to no one else.

2.4. Information about ethnicity and disability of users is kept for the purposes of monitoring our Equalities policy and for reporting back to funders.

3. Access to information

3.1. Information is confidential to Nottingham narrow Boat Project as an organisation and may be passed to colleagues, line managers or trustees to ensure the best quality service for users.

3.2. Where information is sensitive, i.e. it involves disputes or legal issues; it will be confidential to the employee dealing with the case and their line manager. Such information should be clearly labelled 'Confidential' and should

state the names of the colleagues entitled to access the information and the name of the individual or group who may request access to the information.

3.3. Colleagues will not withhold information from their line manager unless it is purely personal.

3.4. The individual may have sight of Nottingham Narrow Boat project records held in their name or that of their organisation. The request must be in writing to the Chair giving 14 days' notice and be signed by the individual, or in the case of an organisation's records, by the Chair or Executive Officer. Sensitive information as outlined in para 3.2 will only be made available to the person or organisation named on the file.

3.5. Employees may have sight of their personnel records by giving 14 days' notice in writing to the Chair of the trustees.

3.6. When photocopying or working on confidential documents, colleagues must ensure people passing do not see them. This also applies to information on computer screens. A computer should always be locked when not in use

4. Storing information

4.1. General non-confidential information about the Project is kept in unlocked filing cabinets and in computer files with open access to all Nottingham Narrow Boat Project colleagues.

4.2. Personnel information on employees, volunteers, students and other individuals working within Nottingham Narrow Boat Project will be kept in lockable filing cabinets, or on a secure folder on the PC, it can only be accessed by line managers and the Chair of the trustees.

4.3. Files or filing cabinet drawers bearing confidential information should be labelled 'confidential'. If the file is held on a computer it must be password protected

4.4. In an emergency, the Chair may authorise access to files by other people within the project.