

# **GAF** **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

## **Aim of Policy**

GAF is committed to maintaining high standards of confidentiality in all aspects of its work. The organisation holds some confidential information. This is provided by, or derived from, voluntary/community organisations, members of the public, third parties and staff.

## **1. Objectives of Policy**

- 1.1 To ensure that confidential records are properly managed.
- 1.2 To ensure that confidential information is only released in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, legislative considerations, best practice and strict guidelines of the organisation.
- 1.3 To ensure that information is only disclosed with the informed consent of the person or organisation to whom the information relates, with the following exceptions:
  - when, by law, we must share information, for example with the Council Tax Office and Inland Revenue;
  - in an emergency, when public safety is at risk and when information is required by the police to prevent or detect crime.
- 1.4 To promote a policy that respects commercial sensitivity

## **2. Statement**

- 2.1 The use of information that GAF collects and processes will be used to provide a service or carry out an authorised or requested transaction.
- 2.2 GAF will not sell, trade, rent or lend confidential information to anyone.
- 2.3 Confidentiality is essential because we recognise:
  - It is Good practice
  - The possible consequences for the organisation or individual if it is breached;
  - The rights of organisations and individuals to have control over information about them;
  - The duties placed on us whereby breaches of confidentiality could lead to formal complaints, grievance or disciplinary actions, or even legal action against us;

## **3. Policy Principles**

We will:

- 3.1 Justify the purpose – Every proposed use or transfer of information will be clearly defined and scrutinised, with continuing uses regularly reviewed by an appropriate guardian.
- 3.2 Not give organisation specific data to a third party.
- 3.3 Not use person specific information (unless absolutely necessary) – Person specific information will not be used unless there is no alternative.
- 3.4 Allow access to information on a strict need to know basis – Only those individuals who need access to organisational, personal and commercially sensitive information will have access to it, and they will only have access to the information items that they need to see.
- 3.5 Ensure everyone at GAF is aware of their responsibilities – Procedures are in place to ensure that those handling information are aware of their responsibilities and obligations.
- 3.6 Understand and comply with the law – GAF complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 in processing information. This policy will be reviewed regularly, ensuring that the organisation complies with all legal requirements.
- 3.7 Hold all confidential and personal information under secure and restricted conditions within the office.

#### **4. Detail**

The three main principles of the confidentiality policy are “informed consent”, “need to know” and “third party disclosure”. These principles apply both to members of the public and to members of staff.

##### **4.1 Informed Consent**

- Disclosure of personal information will only take place with the informed consent of that person. For consent to be informed, we will tell the member of the public/staff why there is a need to share information, with whom it will be shared and the likely consequences of agreeing or not agreeing to disclosure.
- We will state clearly that the information given may need to be shared with others in order to be able to provide the service requested and that non-disclosure could mean that a person would not gain access to a service or to support to which they might otherwise have been entitled.
- We will inform members of the public of our Confidentiality Policy at the first point of contact and ask them to give their consent to permit the passing on of any personal information given, if necessary, on a “need to know” basis.

##### **4.2 Need to Know**

- The transfer of personal information relating to a member of the public/staff will be kept to a minimum on a “need to know” basis. Only those staff or other service providers who have a need to know, in order to provide relevant services, will share information and only after informed consent has been given.

#### 4.3 Disclosure to Third Parties

- Personal information will only be disclosed to third parties with the express, written or oral, consent of the person(s) who is (are) the data subject(s). Disclosure will only be considered, and consent sought, where there are clear reasons why this should happen.
- We will ensure that the recipient understands the need for confidentiality and that disclosure only takes place on the terms agreed with the person it concerns.
- On any occasion when confidential information is provided by way of a written or an oral response, we will state that the information provided is CONFIDENTIAL and should be respected as such.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

The Senior Management Team, with adequate consultation of the Board of Trustees, will regularly review the operation of this policy.

<b>Agreed by GAF</b>	
Signature	Date