



CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY POLICY

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Related Work Instruction	Nil
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, and volunteers with guidance on protecting the confidentiality and privacy of information collected by Older Women's Network Queensland Inc (OWNQ).

2. POLICY STATEMENT

OWNQ aims to uphold the highest standard of staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders' rights to confidentiality and privacy in accordance with the principles embodied in the Commonwealth Privacy Act. OWNQ respects that information shared by any individual belongs to that individual. It is important that OWNQ is consistent and careful in the way it is decided who can see or hear this information, and protects and upholds the legal rights of individuals to access their own records.

3. PROCEDURES

OWNQ will only collect information for the purpose of providing services. Permission to collect and maintain information will be sought from the individual at all times. In seeking the permission OWNQ:

- 3.1 Collects only information that is relevant to our primary function;
- 3.2 Informs individuals why information is being collected, for what purpose it will be used and who will be able to access that information;
- 3.3 Informs individuals that their information will only be shared with others with their consent;
- 3.4 Ensures that the collection of information does not intrude to an unreasonable extent upon the personal affairs of the individual involved;
- 3.5 Keeps staff, volunteer and member/client records in a manner that safeguards them against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, and against other misuse;
- 3.6 Provides individuals with access to their own records.

All Management Committee members, staff, and convenors will read and sign a Code of Conduct on commencement with OWNQ. All newcomers to the organisation are trained in the induction process on the necessity of confidentiality in regards to ascertaining and maintaining information and location of service.

4. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RECORDS

In protecting the privacy of the information of staff and volunteers, OWNQ will ensure the following:

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers will be allocated their own personnel file which will contain all personal information and be held in a secure location on site.
- 4.2 All electronic records will be stored on a password protected computer.
- 4.3 No personal information will be released to a third party including other volunteers or staff without the permission of the individual.
- 4.4 Release of work related information such as work email address, current whereabouts etc must be authorised by an appropriate staff member prior to releasing this information.

5. MEMBER/CLIENT RECORDS

All personal information gathered by staff during the provision of services will remain confidential and secure except when:

- 5.1 Required by law, for example subpoenaed by a court of law;
- 5.2 There is a serious and imminent risk of harm to the client/member or another person and failure to disclose information would place that person at further harm;
- 5.3 Approval of the member/client has been obtained to release information to another party;
or
- 5.4 The case is being reviewed for the purpose of professional supervision (in which case all identifying information will be removed prior to review).

In sharing information regarding members/clients, OWNQ will ensure that the following steps are taken:

- 5.5 Provide members/clients with a Confidentiality and Privacy Statement on commencement of services, which they have to read and sign. This statement outlines OWNQ's responsibilities with regards to their information, how this information will be stored and who can access it. It also outlines what circumstances in which their confidentiality may be breached.
- 5.6 Have a Consent for Information Sharing form which members/clients can sign on an as needed basis. Permission may also be given verbally in cases where the client is unable to sign a Consent for Information Sharing form. Staff must explain this form to members/clients and how it will be used. Staff must not enter any new information on this form after the client has signed, unless permission is sought from the client and the client authorises the new entry by initialising it;
- 5.7 Not removing any case files/notes from the office.

Member/client data which is used for statistical purposes and reporting to funding bodies will have all identifying information removed prior to being used.