

Respect

Respect
Phoneline

Respect
Men's advice line

Respect

Confidentiality Policy:

Respect Phoneline and
Men's Advice Line

General principles

All contacts to the Respect Phoneline and the Men's Advice Line are treated as confidential unless:

- A service user has requested or consented on information being passed on (Exceptions apply, please read below);
- Helplines Advisors are concerned that there is a risk to the welfare or safety of a child or a vulnerable adult is at risk (see 'Service users who are at risk of domestic violence' and 'Service users who are perpetrators of domestic violence' below);
- We have information about acts of terrorism or bomb warnings;
- Helpline Advisors are threatened or verbally attacked by service users;
- A service user interferes with the delivery of our service.

Calls are monitored occasionally for quality or training purposes: Helplines management occasionally listen in to calls. We do not use technology to identify callers'

number or call-recording equipment. Replies to emails and web-chats are also monitored occasionally by management to ensure high standards of quality.

Service users who are at risk of domestic violence

Respect will ensure that service users who are at risk of domestic violence are given complete confidentiality in relation to the perpetrator. This means that Respect will take steps to ensure that perpetrators are never told whether their (ex) partner has had contact with either helpline and in particular that no information on the nature or content of any contact is divulged. If Helpline Advisors are concerned that there is a risk to the welfare or safety of a child or an adult at risk, they may take steps to increase the safety of those individuals by involving another agency. Respect aims to do this alongside the service user and at the very least will inform them of our intention to share information, where it is possible and safe to do so.

Service users who are perpetrators of domestic violence

In the majority of cases contacts from perpetrators of domestic violence will be treated with confidentiality. The personal contact details of service users will not be passed on to any other organisation and the details of contact and advice offered will not be divulged. However, domestic violence perpetrators pose a risk to their (ex) partners, children and sometimes others. If Helpline Advisors have reason to be concerned for the safety of any persons due to the service user's

abusive behaviour, they have a duty not to keep confidential those concerns. If Helpline Advisors believe that a perpetrator poses a particular risk, they will share that information with respective Social Services when there are Child Protection concerns, and/or the Police and his (ex) partner when the risk is immediate and severe.

Respect will inform service users of our intention to share information about the risk they pose, where it is possible and safe to do so.

Principles for sharing information

If the right information is shared responsibly, it can significantly enhance the safety of those at risk of domestic violence. However, there is also the potential for harm if that information is not managed appropriately. Respect will act within the current legal framework with regard to information sharing and data protection. Helplines Advisors will consider Respect's Safeguarding Children policy, Safeguarding Adults at risk policy and Respect's Data Protection policy for this purpose. In all cases, Advisors have a duty to use their own discretion – in consultation with their supervisor and / or line manager – so as not to increase the risk. The main principle upon which information will be shared is to increase the safety of those at risk of domestic violence.

Email and postal communication–retention policy

The following principles apply for email and postal communication:

- A copy of an incoming email and our response(s) to it will be kept for six months and then it will

be destroyed in a secure manner from: all shared mailboxes; from the sent items subfolder; and from the deleted items folder. Helplines Advisors are mindful that when they reply to an email from a shared mailbox, the reply is often saved in their personal mailbox's sent items subfolder. This needs to be dragged and dropped in the sent items subfolder of the respective Helpline's mailbox – and deleted as described above after six months.

- Original letters will be kept in a lockable filing cabinet until they are destroyed. This is a responsibility of the Helplines' Team Leader. Electronic copies of our responses to letters will be saved in password-protected folders for two months (accessible only by Helplines staff) before they are destroyed.

Training and publicity

Respect will ensure that staff fully understand the confidentiality policy, at their training and induction stage.

This confidentiality policy will be part of our publicity for the helplines and copies will be available to the general public.

Reviewed: May 2018

Next review: May 2021