

WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect the interests of individuals who use West Bletchley Council services
- ensure the community have trust and confidence in the council and that their dignity is respected
- protect the council, its staff and volunteers
- comply with data protection law.

West Bletchley Council is committed to ensuring confidential services to all individuals. All personal information will be treated as confidential. Information will only be collected that is necessary and relevant to the work in hand, e.g. to enable delivery of a specific service where the provision of personal details are required. It will be stored securely, only accessible on a need to know basis to those members of staff, and, where appropriate, volunteers, who are duly authorised.

We will ensure that our staff and those acting on our behalf obtain, use and disclose personal information lawfully and correctly, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988. Information will only be passed to another organisation or to other people, with the consent of the individual, unless there are exceptional circumstances, e.g. if we believe that the individual or someone else may be at risk of serious harm or abuse, or if disclosure is required by law. If a member of staff or volunteer intends to get information from another agency/ organisation to help the individual or to refer them to another agency/organisation then this will be explained to the individual and their permission obtained.

Staff and volunteers will make every effort to ensure that face to face discussions and telephone conversations do not compromise user confidentiality, and cannot be overheard by other members of the community present. When raising matters of a personal or confidential nature, individuals will be made aware that they can request to be seen in private.

Only council staff or its agents will access documents printed out on the council's equipment, to ensure the privacy of any personal information printed from council computers by or on behalf of an individual. *Computers used by the public will be checked at regular intervals by staff and at the end of each working day, to ensure that the browsing history and any documents saved on the computer, particularly those including personally identifiable information, are deleted and users' confidentiality is maintained.*

Under no circumstances should staff and volunteers discuss personal information with their partners, family or friends or in an open plan area in such a manner that it is possible to identify the individual.

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Monitoring information such as gender, age, ethnicity and postcodes is collected for the purpose of monitoring the reach of our services and any reporting of this data will not be attributed to individuals.