

Churches and Industry Group Birmingham and Solihull

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

1. Confidentiality and Chaplaincy

Confidentiality is a key part of workplace chaplaincy: on the whole people need to be able to trust that what they tell a workplace chaplain is not going to be reported back to their colleagues or managers. Chaplaincy can provide a 'safe space' in which issues are discussed, in faith that truthfulness can lead towards reconciliation.

2. What does Confidentiality mean in workplace chaplaincy setting?

Confidentiality in workplace chaplaincy relates both to information about individuals and about the business / workplace itself:

- a. In relation to individuals, this means, as a rule, not relaying information that others could readily connect back to an individual / group of individuals. Sometimes general themes arising from chaplaincy encounters may be communicated to others, if the chaplain views that some communication would benefit the organisation and/or the individual. In such a case the chaplain ought to try to make sure that such information is anonymised re persons, locations, dates etc. Sometimes individuals may give the Chaplain permission to tell specific people specific information – eg reference to a GP.
- b. In relation to the business or organisation, the chaplain may be privy to information about the business that is not in the public domain. The chaplain should regard themselves to have the same duty of confidentiality to the business that an employee or contractor would have. In general, the chaplain should not divulge information about the business or organisation to others, without similar limits of confidential boundaries. The chaplain should have a sense of loyalty to the organisation in the public view.

3. Disclosures / Limits of Confidentiality

There may be rare occasions in which workplace chaplains have to break confidentiality. It may not be possible to define absolutely what issues and circumstances might require a breach of confidentiality: it would be good practice, if time and safety allows, to discuss the issue with a chaplain colleague or supervisor prior to a significant disclosure.

Occasions when disclosure may be or is necessary:

- a. Safeguarding – protecting the welfare of others or the individual themselves.
- b. Crime – protecting the welfare of the organisation, the public, other members of staff, from a significant criminal threat / detriment.
- c. Health and Safety – protecting the welfare of the organisation, the public, or other members of staff When we share information on confidential issues, we need to have the full informed consent of the person involved.

If we judge that information needs to be disclosed, it may be good practice to inform the person involved that such disclosure is necessary.

4. Keeping records

As a general practice, records of chaplaincy encounters should be anonymised (see Data Protection policy). However, in cases where breach of confidentiality is deemed necessary, it is good practice to record timely information relating to the issue, in order to accurately support the disclosure.

5. Permission to Share Information freely

It may be that individuals grant the chaplain permission to share freely information that has been discussed during a conversation. Similarly, chaplains may refer to information that is in the public domain.