

# FMA UK Confidentiality agreement

This policy is provided to explain how we deal with confidential information that we receive either through our help lines, our website, or other method. This document explains about your expectation of confidentiality and any limitations or exceptions to this policy.

In general any information that is given in confidence by you will not be shared with anyone outside of FMA UK without your express consent. Information about you may be shared with other FMA UK members as necessary. If it becomes necessary to refer anyone to a third party, we will ask for their consent before sharing relevant information with another agency or individual.

## Limits on Confidentiality

There may be times when a charity member feels it is not possible to keep this confidentiality agreement. This will only happen in special circumstances where they feel it is absolutely necessary. Whenever possible they will talk to the person concerned before this happens.

Times when it might be necessary to break the confidentiality agreement:

- When disclosures of terrorist activity or drug trafficking are made.
- When it is discovered that a young person under 16 years of age is being abused or is at significant risk of abuse
- When the enquirer or someone else is at risk of serious harm.
- When the courts place an obligation on staff or volunteers

If it is decided that it is necessary to break confidentiality the following steps will be taken:

- It will be discussed with the enquirer first if possible
- The volunteer will consult with his/her charity contact e.g. helpline co-ordinator, website admin, or Trustee before proceeding.
- As much as possible, the enquirer will be kept informed to what is happening

Please contact us if you feel that you would like or need more information on our confidentiality policy and how we operate it.

## Recorded Information

- Statistical information about our help lines are recorded without using caller identity. At no point is 1471 or caller display used to identify or record a caller's number.
- Users of the website may be identified by their internet protocol (IP) address, email address, or forum username.
- Information where possible is kept restricted to members of the charity that require access to it.
- FMA UK keeps all personal information in accordance to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

# FMA UK Confidentiality Policy Compliance Statement

I understand that my obligations under this agreement will continue after the cessation of my position with the charity and I will return any documents or other media containing confidential information to FMA UK.

I will not disclose any confidential information with others including friends, or family, who do not have a need to know it. I will also not access, or view any confidential information other than what is required for my position.

I have read and understood the FMA UK Confidentiality Policy and agree to comply with and be bound by all the confidentiality obligations of FMA UK specified therein.

I understand that violation of the Agreement may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from position, as well as legal liability.

Address .....

City ..... Post Code .....

Telephone ..... Email .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Print Name ..... Position .....

Please complete the details above and send this document back to the office via post, email or fax using the information below:

Fibromyalgia Association UK  
Training and Enterprise Centre  
Applewood Grove  
Cradley Heath  
B64 6EW  
Email: [head.office@fmuk.org](mailto:head.office@fmuk.org)

<b>For office or coordinator use only:</b>	
Document Received:	
Approved by:	
Comments:	

## **Confidentiality Agreement Notes**

The notes below are intended to help you when you are either trying to respect others confidentiality or when you may have to break it in accordance with the guidelines above. The comments below are not exhaustive and if you have any queries then please ask your coordinator or a trustee.

### ***Who does this apply to?***

This policy applies to the Trustees, Regional coordinators and volunteers working directly with FMA UK. It covers information that is directly controlled by FMA UK such as website enquiries, helpline calls and other communications. Support groups are not affected by this policy but are welcome to accept and use it for their own communications.

### ***Who is your coordinator?***

It will depend on what function you are performing. If you are working on the helpline then it would be the helpline coordinator or their deputy. If you are a moderator on the website then you would contact the site administrator. You can also contact any of the trustees or the chair person.

### **What should I do if I think have to break confidentiality?**

It is very important to respect others confidentiality but when you feel you may have to break it you must consider the reasons for this. It is important to make notes for each situation so that you can relay the circumstances to your coordinator or third party if required. Please note such things as gender, accent, background noise, code words etc. Some specific examples relating to possible breaks in confidentiality are highlighted below.

### ***Situations involving children***

You may suspect that a child is at risk. This could include physical, mental, sexual or other type of abuse. However a suspicion is not proof and it may be unfounded. In all cases, very great care should be taken not to act precipitately. However, with cases that involve non accidental injury to children, it is imperative that action is taken promptly on any information. A child's life may be in danger.

### ***Acts of Terrorism***

On the rare occasions where you are faced with making a disclosure in this scenario, you should make it clear to enquirers that there are problems attached to revealing information of this nature to them as they may, in a few extreme situations, be required to disclose it under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1984.

### ***Callers harming themselves***

Callers may state that they have harmed or are going to harm themselves. When this happens, you must ensure that the advice and information given assists the caller to see that help is available and encourages them to seek qualified help and support. Do not attempt to provide the support yourself. Useful resources are provided below.

### ***Callers harming others***

Callers may state that they have harmed or are going to harm others. When this happens, you must ensure that the advice and information given assists the caller to see that help is available and encourages them to seek help and support. You must make it clear to the caller the serious consequences of their actions, both for the caller and any third party involved. You must also ensure confidentiality where possible for any third party involved.

### How should I reply to email enquiries and preserve confidentiality?

When an email enquiry is received from the website or from a third party it is usually a case of replying to that email and passing on some information. However if the enquirer is looking for a support group or to contact another person then what you do depends on who they are looking to contact.

If it is a public contact like a support group email or the Office, an RC or a trustee then you can pass on their email address or website contact form address to the enquirer. It is important that we are careful with people's details and ensure that we pass information as the enquirer expects us to.

If it is a personal contact like a member of a group then you would contact that member first and see if they are willing to accept this enquiry. If they are ok with this, then you would pass on the details of the third party to them.

**Example:** An enquirer trusts FMA UK with their private information and there will be an expectation of privacy. When an RC passes information about a group to an enquirer they are passing on public contact info but if the RC was to pass the enquirers info onto the support group then this could be infringing on the enquirers expectation of privacy.

If you are in doubt then ask the person involved if they are ok with passing on their information to another person.

#### *Useful Resources*

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
The Samaritans	<a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>	08457 90 90 90
NSPCC / Childline	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>	0808 500 5000
Mind	<a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a>	0845 766 0163