

## RECORDS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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This section seeks to comply with Regulations 14, 21, 12 & 16 and NMS 27, Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement) Regulations 2005

## **1 Policy**

It is the policy of PAC-UK to maintain up-to-date, comprehensive and accurate case records for each of our service users which give details of their agreements and contacts with us, including their comments, compliments and complaints and of any allegations. Records will also be kept of Staff and Volunteers who work for us (see section 8), including comments, compliments and complaints about PAC-UK and of any allegations against staff or disciplinary matters. All staff, volunteers and contracted freelance sessional workers understand the policies and procedures with respect to records and confidentiality and compliance is monitored by the Registered Manager/CEO in conjunction with the service managers.

## **2 Service User Records**

- 2.1 Staff working with service users will maintain a case file and will keep it up to date. It is expected that entries will be made on the file within one month of every occurrence.
- 2.2 The file will be in the format provided by PAC-UK.
- 2.3 A referral document will form the basis of each file and will be completed in full to include: the names of the service user, date of birth, contact details; whether s/he is an adopted child or an adopted person who has attained the age of 18, or details of his/her relationship to an adopted child or adopted person; information regarding the service requested and the initially agreed action to be taken; and whether the services are provided on behalf of a local authority by virtue of section 3 (4) b of the 2002 Act (a).
- 2.4 A "Client Record Sheet" is on the back of the referral document: it is a summary of all the dates and types of contacts the service user has had with PAC-UK. This form will be maintained for each service user.
- 2.5 Staff will ensure that the 'Initial Assessment Form' is placed on the file as soon as it is completed, or made available.
- 2.6 Staff will record their contacts with the service user and with others associated with the service user. The latter will be in a separate section of the file.
- 2.7 Recording will be clear and relevant. Entries may be typed or handwritten but must be legible. Entries must be dated and initialled by the allocated worker. Workers must be mindful that service users have access to their own file and must ensure that they write their entries in a way that enables the service user to understand them.
- 2.8 Recordings must indicate the purpose of each contact (whether initiated by PAC-UK or the service user), give a summary of any discussions/sessions, of any actions that may have been taken, and of the outcomes.
- 2.9 Counsellors' case records will be kept in paper files and securely stored.

- 2.10 Electronic case records (including emails) pertaining to service users are printed off and added to their paper file. Electronic case records are also securely stored on computers which are password protected and are backed up on a daily basis.
- 2.11 Files which become inactive for a period of a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year should be reviewed as to future action or closed.
- 2.12 Submitting a file for closure takes place by dating and signing the 'closed' section on the referral document, and writing a closing summary. The latter will be signed and dated by the allocated worker and by the Head of Service or Practice Manager.
- 2.13 Closing Summaries will include the following information: case surname, closure date, names of clients who were involved in this case (for example in family and mediation work) the name/s of staff involved in the service delivery, presenting problems, PAC-UK's intended service provision, PAC-UK's actual service provision, main outcomes and recommendations.
- 2.14 When closing files of service users or at the end of the fourth face-to face counselling session, whichever comes first, the service user will be sent a Client Feedback form with regard to service satisfaction and effectiveness.
- 2.15 Closed files pertaining to face-to-face counselling will be retained for 10 years and then destroyed (except in cases where contact has been declined by one party). Closed files of service users who did not take up any further services after initial referral and/or initial consultation will be archived for 10 years.
- 2.16 All information on the file is confidential to the service user. Sensitive information (within terms the of Data Protection Act) may not be disclosed from the file unless the service user gives written permission, or a court orders it to be disclosed, or a children's guardian appointed by CAFCASS wishes to have access to a file regarding a child.
- 2.17 Breaches of confidentiality are a very serious matter and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- 2.18 The Head of Service will monitor the quality and accuracy of the records and the Registered Manager will spot check that this policy is being adhered to. Remedial action will be taken where necessary.

### **3 Personnel Records**

- 3.1 A personnel record will be kept for members of staff, sessional workers and volunteers as set out in section 7, paragraph 31 of these procedures.
- 3.2 Personnel records are confidential to PAC-UK and the person to whom they relate. Employees should be aware that, in cases where they seek alternative employment, the content of their employment record file will be disclosed to a prospective employer if they would or could be working with children or vulnerable adults.
- 3.3 Breaches of confidentiality of personnel records are a very serious matter and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

### **4 Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

- 4.1 Comments, Compliments and Complaints will be filed according to the policy in section 9 of these procedures. Copies of complaints, where they apply to individual staff members, are to be attached to personnel records.