



Fosterline Confidentiality Policy

Policy Statement

Fosterline is delivered by FosterTalk on behalf of the Department for Education in England.

This policy is designed to clarify when and how information can be shared by FosterTalk staff, including Fosterline Advisors, in the course of their work with users of the Fosterline Helpline and Website. It has been developed in line with the Helplines Partnership Quality Standards and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which come into force in the UK on 25th May 2018.

Fosterline Advisors will often be entrusted with confidential information by an individual using Fosterline's services, such as information about situations in which they may find themselves or information about children they are looking after. Fosterline staff have a duty under the General Data Protection Regulations and this Confidentiality Policy, to protect the confidentiality of all such personal information, to process that information fairly, and not to disclose any such personal information without the person's consent, except in certain circumstances which are outlined below.

The General Data Protection Regulations

The GDPR protects personal data and places restrictions on the sharing of personal data within the UK and overseas. Article 4 states that "personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). It adds that:

"an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location number, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person."

The GDPR regulates when and how a person's personal data may be obtained, held, used, disclosed and generally processed. It applies to computerised processing of data and to certain paper based files and records, regardless of whether this information has been provided verbally or electronically e.g. by email

To comply with the law, information must be collected and used fairly, stored securely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully.

Further information is contained in the FosterTalk Data Protection Policy and Procedure.

Confidentiality and Fosterline

All Fosterline Advisors and Staff are bound by this confidentiality policy.

The following general statement about confidentiality will be heard by callers accessing the Fosterline Helpline and they will be reminded during the course of the call:

“Welcome to Fosterline, your confidential and impartial fostering advice service. All calls are recorded for quality and control purposes.”

Breaking Confidentiality

Confidentiality may only be broken in the following circumstances:

- To Protect Others, e.g.
 - Where this serious risk of harm to the individual as in the case of threatened suicide
 - Where there is a risk of harm to a child, or if the caller discloses another safeguarding issue.
- To prevent a serious criminal act, e.g. an Act of Terrorism (The Prevention of Terrorism Act 1989, makes it an offence to fail to pass on information to the police which may help to prevent terrorism or apprehend a terrorist))

If a Fosterline Advisor feels that they need to break confidentiality then the Fosterline Manager **MUST** be consulted before disclosure is made.

Wherever possible the subject will be informed that information shared by them in confidence is going to be passed on the relevant statutory body and attempts made to persuade them to share this information themselves.

The Fosterline Manager will be responsible for making the final decision and ensuring that the correct action is taken, in accordance with FosterTalk’s safeguarding policy.

Publication of this Policy

This Policy will be published on the Fosterline Website and Helpline users will be provided with a copy of the Policy on request.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

FosterTalk Data Protection Policy & Procedure;

FosterTalk Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

FosterTalk Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure