

Confidentiality policy for the women's helpline and support email service

This confidentiality agreement exists between all users of our helpline, email and services and the helpline service.

We take confidentiality very seriously and aim to create a trusting relationship between service users and helpline staff.

Personal details are not shared with third parties unless consent has been given, and only on a 'need to know' basis.

Exceptions to this are detailed below and are made only where there is a potential risk to the individual or others and/or where required by law.

The philosophy of confidentiality of the women's helpline service is paramount. Each member of the helpline team is responsible for ensuring confidentiality.

Anything discussed on the women's helpline will be confidential between the you and the helpline service, not between you and the helpline operator.

Objectives of the confidentiality policy

to protect the personal information of those who contact us

to provide a service where people feel able to speak openly about their concerns, knowing that the information is kept private

to ensure the protection of service users, staff, and the public

to ensure that the helpline adheres to the Data Protection Act and the GDPR

to ensure that helpline staff understand and adhere to the policy.

The confidentiality policy in practice

Caller information is retained for the purpose of returning calls, sending out requested literature and for reviewing the levels of caller satisfaction. This information is kept on a secure electronic database. Any handwritten information is confidentially shredded.

Callers to the helpline are free to speak to staff anonymously.

Anonymised data is used for statistical and monitoring purposes only.

Our telephone system does **not** reveal the caller's telephone number. If helpline staff need to return a call the caller will need to disclose their number to call back, the helpline telephone number will be withheld. Please note that if an individual has

chosen to bar anonymous or withheld numbers then we will not be able to return calls.

We do not pass on caller details outside of the charity unless this has been agreed with the caller. Where calls relate to other areas of the charity, we will pass on contact details. Voicemail messages or emails for specific members of staff or departments will be forwarded to the relevant person. Clear consent is not sought in these cases but is automatically presumed due to the nature of the enquiry.

Email correspondence is kept securely and electronically and will be forwarded only where necessary. For example, a fundraising query will be forwarded to the fundraising team. Emails are stored electronically for 24 months for training, evaluation and for reviewing the levels of caller satisfaction.

Anonymised statistical information relating to calls is collected for managerial purposes and may be shared.

All your information will be kept confidential unless:

you give your consent for the helpline service to pass on information to a third party

your email enquiry is relevant to another department within helpline organisation

unless the law requires disclosure, as in the Prevention of Terrorist Act 2000, in which any information relating to a threat of terrorism is passed to the policy of terrorism hotline.

That you as the caller are considered a danger to themselves or others (see SODIT safeguarding policy)

Equal opportunities policy for the women's helpline

The women's helpline acknowledges and accepts differences in society and ensures its commitment to equal opportunities to those using the service.

The women's helpline provides a service sensitive to the needs of all likely callers and will respect their backgrounds in relation to age, gender, race/culture, physical and mental disabilities, religion and sexual orientation or gender reassignment (see SODIT equal opps policy)

Comments or complaints

We want to hear from you.

If you have contacted us recently, we would very much appreciate it if you could give us some feedback on your most recent call or email. Your comments or complaint may be seen outside the helpline but will be confidential within SODIT unless you give us permission to use your responses.

We aim to provide the best service we can. Your comments will help us develop the service to ensure that it meets the needs of all our callers.

Submit your comments or complaints about the helpline

Making a complaint about the helpline

The views of our callers are very important to us and we take any negative feedback seriously. If you are unhappy with any aspect a call, we would like to hear from you and appreciate the opportunity this gives us to learn and improve the service we are offering.

You can: contact the manager at info@sodit.org

put your complaint in writing to the Support Services Manager. This can be instead of, or as well as, your verbal complaint; or access the 'comments or complaints' page on our website

If you wish to make a formal complaint in writing instead of, or in addition to, making a complaint by telephone, please write to Survivors of Depression in Transition, office 27, Woodbourn Business Centre, Jessell st, Sheffield, S9 3HY