



## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland (the Foundation) is committed to ensuring that sensitive information it holds as part of its work remains confidential and is not disclosed to third parties. This policy reminds staff, volunteers, committee members and Board members about the need to ensure that all such information remains confidential and is not disclosed to third parties.

### **2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out responsibilities for the Foundation's position on confidential and sensitive information in addition to the formal requirements for data protection set out in our separate policy.
- 2.2 The policy applies to all employees (including freelance staff and consultants), trustees (directors) and volunteers (including committee co-optees and grant panel members).

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 The Foundation is privileged to receive a lot of personal and private information in the course of our business. We will not disclose confidential information to third parties or talk about trustee, volunteer, employee, donor, grantee or partner organisation's affairs in any way that would compromise them or the Foundation, except if we are required to do so by law, or where we have express permission to do so.
- 3.2 To ensure transparency, the Foundation publishes public information about its performance, income (including donations) and expenditure (including grants) in its audited financial statements, publications, website and in other forms.
- 3.3 The Foundation allows donors to remain anonymous should they so wish as long as due diligence can be carried out on the provenance of gifts, and donations are made in line with the Gift Acceptance Policy.
- 3.4 The Foundation aims to support best practice in the philanthropy field and charity sector more widely, and may share examples of its documentation but these will always be anonymised where necessary to ensure confidentiality.
- 3.5 Papers for and minutes and notes of the Foundation's Board of trustees and its committees and grant panels are confidential.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

- 4.1 All trustees, volunteers and employees are responsible for ensuring the privacy of confidential information to which they have access.
- 4.2 Trustees, volunteers and employees must take the greatest care to secure confidential documents (e.g. those relating to applications, donors, funds, Board meetings and grant panels) and to make sure they are destroyed when no longer required. The Foundation provides facilities for the secure shredding of confidential documents.
- 4.3 If a trustee, volunteer or employee is in any doubt about whether something is confidential, they should refer the matter to the Chief Executive or another member of the Executive staff in the first instance. They will decide whether any information can be disclosed.

#### **5. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- 5.1 As a registered charity, the Foundation's activities are not covered by Freedom of Information legislation. However, the Foundation may enter into partnerships with public bodies which are covered. For example, the Foundation may be engaged to deliver a grant-making programme for a local authority or health body. In such circumstances, any documentation covering the arrangements between the Foundation and the public body concerned may be subject to freedom of information requests. However, where funds are held and distributed directly by the Foundation, we will not share details of applications or assessments, although records of decisions made on the recommendation of funding panels will be made available in response to a suitable request under the legislation.

#### **6. BREACHES OF THE POLICY**

- 6.1 Trustees, volunteers and employees must notify the Chief Executive as soon as possible if they believe or suspect that a breach of this policy has occurred or may occur in the future. Where any alleged breach relates to the Chief Executive, either the Chief Finance and Operating Officer or Chair of the Board should be notified.
- 6.2 In most cases breaches of the policy will likely be unintentional so may, following investigation, be dealt with informally and through reminders of the requirement to work within this policy. However, repeated or deliberate breaches could result in formal action. For employees, such issues will be dealt with under the Foundation's disciplinary procedure. For trustees, investigation will be carried out by the Governance, Finance and Audit Committee and could result in disqualification from the Board. Breaches by volunteers will be investigated by the Chief Executive and could result in individuals being removed from committees or panels.

#### **7. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 The Foundation will monitor the effectiveness of this policy regularly to ensure its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. The policy will be reviewed by the Board every three years.

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