



Mermaids Data Protection Policy

Mermaids needs to keep certain information on its employees, volunteers, service users and trustees to carry out its day to day operations, to meet its objectives and to comply with legal obligations.

The organisation is committed to ensuring any personal data will be dealt with in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. To comply with the law, personal information will be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone handling personal data is fully aware of the requirements and acts in accordance with data protection procedures. This document also highlights key data protection procedures within the organisation.

This policy covers (insert types of people as appropriate – employed staff, trustees, volunteers) In line with the Data Protection Act 1998 principles, (name of the organisation) will ensure that personal data will:

- Be obtained fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met
- Be obtained for a specific and lawful purpose
- Be adequate, relevant but not excessive
- Be accurate and kept up to date
- Not be held longer than necessary
- Be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects
- Be subject to appropriate security measures
- Not to be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA)

The definition of 'Processing' is obtaining, using, holding, amending, disclosing, destroying and deleting personal data. This includes some paper based personal data as well as that kept on computer.

The Personal Data Guardianship Code suggests five key principles of good data governance on which best practice is based. The organisation will seek to abide by this code in relation to all the personal data it processes, i.e.

- **Accountability:** those handling personal data follow publicised data principles to help gain public trust and safeguard personal data.
- **Visibility:** Data subjects should have access to the information about themselves that an organisation holds. This includes the right to have incorrect personal data corrected and to know who has had access to this data.
- **Consent:** The collection and use of personal data must be fair and lawful and in accordance with the DPA's eight data protection principles. Personal data should only be used for the purposes agreed by the data subject. If personal data is to be shared with a third party or used for another purpose, the

data subject's consent should be explicitly obtained.

- **Access:** Everyone should have the right to know the roles and groups of people within an organisation who have access to their personal data and who has used this data.
- **Stewardship:** Those collecting personal data have a duty of care to protect this data throughout the data life span.
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Mermaids processes the following personal information:

- Information on applicants for posts, including references
- Employee information – contact details, bank account number, payroll information, supervision and appraisal notes
- Trustees – contact details
- Users – contact details and brief notes of the reasons for contact and information given

Personal information is kept in the following forms:

- Paper and electronic based systems

Groups of people within the organisation who will process personal information are: employed staff, trustees and trained volunteers.

The name of the Data Controller within our organisation as is Susie Green, CEO.

Under the Data Protection Guardianship Code, overall responsibility for personal data in a not for profit organisation rests with the governing body. In the case of Mermaids, this is the trustee board.

The governing body delegates tasks to the Data Controller. The Data Controller is responsible for:

- understanding and communicating obligations under the Act
- identifying potential problem areas or risks
- producing clear and effective procedures

All employed staff, trustees and volunteers who process personal information must ensure they not only understand but also act in line with this policy and the data protection principles.

Breach of this policy will result in disciplinary proceedings, and if volunteer, termination of the volunteer contract.

To meet our responsibilities staff, volunteers and trustees will:

- Ensure any personal data is collected in a fair and lawful way;
- Explain why it is needed at the start;
- Ensure that only the minimum amount of information needed is collected and used;
- Ensure the information used is up to date and accurate;
- Review the length of time information is held;
- Ensure it is kept safely;
- Ensure the rights people have in relation to their personal data can be exercised

We will ensure that:

- Everyone managing and handling personal information is trained to do so.
- Anyone wanting to make enquiries about handling personal information, whether a member of staff,

- volunteer or service user, knows what to do;
- Any disclosure of personal data will be in line with our procedures.
- Queries about handling personal information will be dealt with swiftly and politely.

Training and awareness raising about the Data Protection Act and how it is followed in this organisation will take the following forms:

On induction:

- This policy will be provided on induction
- Recipients sign for information received as proof of receipt and understanding

General training/ awareness raising:

- Providing reminders to staff/ trustees and other volunteers, with annual reminders about the policy and expectations

Before personal information is collected, we will consider:

- Do we need to collect this information
- How it will be used

We will inform people whose information is gathered about the following:

- Service users will be given the reassurance that data is collected for Mermaids purposes only, and will not be shared with 3rd parties, unless there is a safeguarding concern and we consider the life of a child to be in immediate danger

Personal sensitive information will not be used apart from the exact purpose for which permission was given.

The organisation will take steps to ensure that personal data is kept secure at all times against unauthorised or unlawful loss or disclosure. The following measures will be taken:

- Encryption of laptops or mobile devices containing data taken out of users homes
- Strong passwords on profiles
- Regular review of passwords and protections

Any unauthorised disclosure of personal data to a third party by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Any unauthorised disclosure of personal data to a third party by a volunteer or trustee may result in termination of the trustee or volunteer contract.

Anyone whose personal information we process has the right to know:

- What information we hold and process on them
- How to gain access to this information
- How to keep it up to date
- What we are doing to comply with the Act.

They also have the right to prevent processing of their personal data in some circumstances and the right to correct, rectify, block or erase information regarded as wrong.

Individuals have a right under the Act to access certain personal data being kept about them on computer and certain files. Any person wishing to exercise this right should apply in writing to Susie Green, CEO, BM Mermaids, London WC1N 3XX.

We may make a charge of £10 on each occasion access is requested.

The following information will be required before access is granted:

- Full name and address, including any identifying information, such as contact numbers and email address
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We may also require proof of identity before access is granted. The following forms of ID will be required:

- Valid Photo card Driving Licence or Passport
- Recent utility bill in the applicants name within 3 months of application

Queries about handling personal information will be dealt with swiftly and politely.

We will aim to comply with requests for access to personal information as soon as possible, but will ensure it is provided within the 40 days required by the Act from receiving the written request and £10 fee.

This policy will be reviewed at intervals of 3 years to ensure it remains up to date and compliant with the law.

I confirm I have read and understood Mermaid's Data Protection Policy and will act in accordance with it.

I am connected with this organisation in my capacity as a

Member of staff

Volunteer

Trustee/ management committee member

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

Please return this form to Susie Green, CEO, at BM Mermaids, London, WC1N 3XX or email to ceo@mermaidsuk.org.uk