



## **Confidentiality Policy and Procedure**

### **Introduction**

Brighter Futures for Children is a not-for-profit company, owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council. The company took over the responsibility for the delivery of children's services in Reading in December 2018.

The company is responsible for the delivery of children's social care, education (including SEND), early years & prevention.

Reading Information Advice and Support Service for SEND (Reading IASS) runs a self-referral service for parents, carers and children and young people, offering impartial information, advice and support about all aspects of a child or young person's special educational needs. The handling of information that parents, carers, children or young people provide complies with the requirements of data protection legislation and is not shared with anyone outside of Reading IASS unless the appropriate permission has been given by the service user, or there are Child Protection or Safeguarding issues and/or concerns. Reading IASS is a self-referral service therefore third parties making a referral will be asked to pass our contact details to the person they wish to refer.

### **Confidentiality Policy Statement**

This policy and procedure should be used in line with "Reading IASS Lone Working with Children and Young People Policy and Procedures", "Children and Young People's Confidentiality Policy and Procedure", the "Impartiality Policy and Procedure" as well as local "Safeguarding and Child Protection" Policies and Procedures.

### **Confidentiality Procedure**

Information held by Reading IASS is confidential. That means we will not share anything we have discussed with anyone outside the team without your permission. Information is held on a secure password protected database, only accessed by Reading IASS staff and not available to Reading Borough Council ("RBC") or Brighter Futures for Children ("BFC") staff or schools. Any paper records are held in locked filing cabinets and drawers, to which only Reading IASS staff have access.

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Approved by IASS Management Group June 2022. Review date June 2023.

Where copies of documents are received from third parties as part of casework, they will be destroyed when no longer required for the purpose of the case. All paper records are held only so long as required for the case and then are destroyed as confidential waste.

Reading IASS staff will obtain consent from the parents/carer/child or young person (as applicable or appropriate) before consulting the case file or any other papers relating to the child or young person with special educational needs or disability or discussing a child or young person with RBC/BFfC or school staff.

A Reading IASS case (meaning a current piece of work for that service user) will be considered to be closed once an outcome has been achieved and entered on the database and there are no further ongoing actions or, alternatively, if there are no further actions and there has been no contact with the service user for six months. Database records will be retained for the duration of SEN Support or Education Health and Care Plan and will be anonymised (kept only for statistical purposes) when the young person reaches the age of 25 (or earlier on request).

In the event of case notes being requested by parents/carer/child/young person under the Data Protection Act, the Reading IASS Team Manager will send the requested notes directly to the parents/carer/child/young person or an appointment can be made to visit the office and inspect the data.

**The only exceptions to confidentiality are:**

**1. In regard to information received which leads staff or volunteers to believe that a person may be at risk. In such circumstances Reading IASS has a legal obligation to pass on concerns in line with local safeguarding and child protection procedures and to cooperate with social services where such a concern has arisen.**

**2. Where the law requires us to disclose information.**

**Confidentiality Procedure for Children and Young People**

Confidentiality practice should always be explained to children and young people from the outset and communicated in a way that they can understand (see Easy Read Children and Young People Confidentiality Policy). Children and young people should understand the meaning of the word 'confidential' and the limits of the confidentiality that can be offered. The member of staff should check back on the understanding of the child or young person, before commencing support.

**Classification: OFFICIAL**

If a member of Reading IASS staff thinks it would be in the best interests of the child or young person to share information, then this will be discussed with them. The member of staff will explore their reasons for wanting to keep the meetings confidential and try to work on any issues or misunderstandings that may be getting in the way of including their parents or carers. If the child or young person is clear that they do not want their parents or carers to be involved, then this is their right and confidentiality must be maintained (even if Reading IASS staff judge this to be an unwise decision).

If a member of Reading IASS staff is concerned that someone is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, then they must discuss this as a matter of urgency with their line manager, following local safeguarding and child protection procedures. Before any information is shared, and if it is safe to do so, this will be discussed with the child or young person to try to seek their permission, prepare them and explain the reasons for taking this action.

***Please read this in line with Reading IASS for SEND's Children and Young People Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.***