



Houghton Regis Helpers

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## Houghton Regis Helpers

### Data Protection Policy

November 2024

#### **Introduction**

As a voluntary organisation working with volunteers, service-users (referred to as 'clients' within this Policy) and, on occasions, other organisations, Houghton Regis Helpers handles personal information relating to individuals and therefore has a duty to protect that information under the Data Protection Act 1998. Under the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, which came into force on 25 May 2018, the organisation has an obligation to comply with current law when collecting, processing and sharing personal data. The legislation allows for volunteers, clients and other contacts to request to see the personal data held on them and it requires organisations to comply with eight principles for data protection: to be fair and lawful; purposes; adequacy; accuracy; retention; rights; security; and international where applicable (transferring personal data overseas).

#### **How data is collected and processed**

##### From clients requesting help

A] by the phoneholder who records, in writing, personal details given verbally in the phone log and/or on client record sheet

B] by referral by a third party (relative, friend, or another professional) via phone or email

C] by volunteers carrying out initial assessment visit and completing client record sheet, which is transferred promptly to the phoneholder and Secretary.

Access to client record sheets is restricted to the phoneholders and Secretary, and made available to the Chair on request, if required and deemed necessary.

Processing data: personal information relating to clients is recorded electronically on to a password-protected database by the Secretary. Access to the records is restricted to a stand-alone laptop computer.

##### From volunteers

Personal information relating to volunteers is collected on completion of the Volunteer Expression of Interest form; DBS application; and, where applicable, volunteer driver declaration form.

Processing data: personal information relating to volunteers is recorded electronically on to a password-protected database by the Secretary.

Access to the records is restricted to a stand-alone laptop computer.

Basic information, such as names and contact details, is only shared with volunteers as and when required to carry out a volunteer job.

#### **Privacy Notice and dealing with 'subject access requests'**

Under GDPR the organisation is required to inform individuals in a concise, open and transparent way how personal information and data is to be used and to inform individuals

through the organisation's **privacy notice**. The privacy notice will include how long data is retained for and the lawful basis for processing the data. Houghton Regis Helpers has identified the **lawful basis** for processing personal data relating to clients is because, due to their vulnerability, the information is vital to their interests. The **lawful basis** for processing personal data relating to volunteers is because it is within the legitimate interests of the organisation to use the data. Personal information relating to volunteers is only used in the context of the role of a volunteer.

The privacy notice is displayed on the website; included in the Volunteer Welcome Pack; and shared with clients in the Welcome letter.

Individuals have the right to know what data is held on them, why the data is being processed and whether it will be given to any third party. They have the right to request this information as 'hard-copy', known as a **subject access request**. Houghton Regis Helpers will comply with subject access requests within one calendar month of receiving such a request. A copy of information will be provided free of charge, however if there are repetitive or excessive requests for copies of information a reasonable fee may be requested.

### **Retention of data**

Personal information on individuals is retained for a minimum of five years unless the individual:

- is known to have moved away
- has deceased
- is a volunteer who withdraws from the organisation
- specifically requests data to be erased (subject to the individual's vulnerability and mental capacity to make an informed decision, or if they are deemed to be at risk)

All electronically stored personal information and data that is not retained will be permanently erased from databases and manually-filed records will be shredded and disposed of safely.

Personal information relating to 'regular' clients and volunteers will be reviewed at least every five years if no changes or updates have been made in the interim.

### **Individual's Rights**

Houghton Regis Helpers will ensure that practice and procedures uphold the GDPR rights of individuals. These include:

- the right to be informed
- the right of access
- the right to rectification
- the right to erasure
- the right to restrict processing
- the right to data portability
- the right to object
- the right not to be subject to automated decision-making including profiling

### **Sharing personal information**

All individuals have the right to know what data is held on them and whether it will be shared with a third party. The recipients of personal information is limited and all data is considered confidential - the sharing of information is on a need-to-know basis, such as the name and

address of a client for a volunteer and the nature of the help requested to enable that volunteer to complete the task. On occasions when it is deemed necessary to share information with a third party such as another organisation or professional (for example, Adult Social Care, Citizen's Advice Bureau, or Ward Councilor) consent will be sought from the client, subject to the individual's vulnerability and mental capacity to make an informed decision.

However, under GDPR, disclosure or reporting of a safeguarding concern over-rides the need to ask permission from a client to share their details with the emergency services, the local authority safeguarding team and / or other agencies if the local authority has a multi-agency team.

When a third party, such as a relative, friend or other professional, refers a potential client to Houghton Regis Helpers, all personal information collected is limited to name, contact number, email or address only. This data will only be processed if the individual makes contact themselves.

Security protection will be applied when sharing personal information by email or internet – for example, names and addresses will not be used in subject headings; shared documents will be encrypted and passwords sent in separate emails.

### **Responsibility**


Houghton Regis Helpers appoint the Secretary as Data Protection Controller/Processor, who will take responsibility for ensuring that GDPR is upheld. As a non-profit making voluntary organisation, Houghton Regis Helpers are exempt from registering with the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) however the designated officer will ensure that policy and procedure is followed as required by law and will seek advice and guidance from the ICO as and when it may be deemed necessary.

Clients will be notified of the data protection policy and procedures and their rights during the initial assessment visit.

Volunteers will be kept informed of GDPR requirements, data protection policy and procedures and their rights, during induction and through regular newsletters, volunteer events and training.

Any breaches to the Data Protection Policy, by a volunteer or client, must be reported to the Secretary as Data Controller/Processor who will investigate and make recommendations to the Chair and committee for any appropriate action to remedy the breach.

**Houghton Regis Helpers committee is committed to reviewing this policy and our good practice biennially, or sooner if required within the law**

Chair's Signature: 

Print Name Yvonne Farrell

Adopted on: 8 November 2024

Review date: November 2026