

PRIVACY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At NOSS we believe an individual's right to keep their personal information private is of paramount importance.

NOSS is committed to protecting and maintaining the privacy, accuracy and security of personal and financial information in accordance with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 and the privacy provisions of all applicable legislation.

This means that NOSS must obtain consent before we collect, use or provide sensitive information to another organisation or person (see NOSS Client Consent Policy).

Whilst the Act does not extend to information obtained and stored about employees, as a responsible employer we will ensure that data is secure and be open about what we hold and how we use it.

1. Collecting Information

Collecting personal information is essential for NOSS to be able to safely provide a quality service. Unless the law requires otherwise or other exceptional circumstances prevail as described under the Act, we will only collect personal information relevant to the service provided by NOSS.

The information we collect may include personal details, financial information and information related to the service provided by NOSS.

- Information may be collected verbally or via Referral Forms, Medication Charts and Medication Update Forms, Communication Books, Day Activity Forms, Incident Reports, Personal Plans, Customer Detail Forms and faxed information.
- Any information collected, whether written or verbal, will be kept strictly confidential.
- All written client or customer information will be filed as soon as possible.
- Transfer of information, whether written or verbal, will be conducted privately.

2. Disclosing Information

Unless the law requires otherwise or other exceptional circumstances prevail as described under the Act, we will only disclose personal information when we have consent to do so and when it is essential for the safe provision of services.

The information collected by NOSS may be used to:

- administer and manage that service, including charging billing and collecting debts
- gather information which will permit us to better understand the needs of our clients
- fulfill the requirements of the employer/employee relationship

Personal information about a client will not be discussed in front of or disclosed to others unless they have a direct involvement with that client eg information must not be discussed with a support worker who does not work with that client.

This information will be made available only to essential stakeholders, such as:

Client's 'person responsible' (in accordance with the Guardianship and Administration Act 1995) and nominated family members/advocate

Department of Health and Human Services (Service Coordination and Resource Support Team members) or Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Client's residential service
Client's day support services
Client's doctor
Centrelink

All employees and members of the Board of Governance are required to sign a NOSS Declaration of Confidentiality upon commencement.

3. Unauthorised disclosure

NOSS will view the unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal information by our employees or volunteers as a serious breach of this policy. Appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action, will be taken in such cases.

4. Security, Storage and Maintenance

Personal information will be managed confidentially and securely in accordance with the Privacy Guidelines. We will monitor and implement appropriate technical advances or management procedures, to safeguard personal information. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect personal information from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure

- All client information will be stored in individual files in locked filing cabinets..
- Information which is no longer required will be archived for a period of seven years and then shredded.
- Personal information taken out of client's homes (eg medication charts, Client Participation Records, clients banking or finance books) must be kept secure and confidential (ie any material kept in a vehicle should be out of sight and the vehicle should be locked).
- It is the joint responsibility of NOSS workers and residential workers to ensure that records within a client's home are kept secure.
- Personal information stored on our computer systems will be protected through the use of passwords and current virus protection software and only accessed by authorised users.

5. Data Quality

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the data we collect, use or disclose is accurate, complete and up to date and have been obtained directly from individuals or other reputable sources.

6. Access to Personal Information

Individuals will be able to access their personal information upon request. However, access may be denied to information in accordance with the exemptions contained in the Act.

7. Privacy Procedures

All employees will receive training on the NOSS Privacy Policy and NOSS Privacy Procedures.

8. Privacy Enquiries/Complaints

Privacy related enquiries or complaints should be directed to the NOSS Manager. All complaints should be dealt with in accordance with the NOSS Complaints Policy. If you are not satisfied with the result of any complaint you can refer your complaint to the Federal Privacy Commissioner.