

Royal Children's Hospital	<b>POLICY: CORRESPONDENCE &amp; INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM PARENTS/CARERS</b>	<b>Policy No:</b>
		<b>Issue Date: 09.02.14</b>
Gatehouse Centre (for the Assessment & Treatment of Child Abuse)		<b>Review Date: 09.02.15</b>
		<b>Page 1 of 2</b>

## 1. Policy Statement

The Gatehouse recognises the need to document all contact with Clients, both direct and indirect contact, including information provided by parents/carers. This is to ensure accountability, continuity of care and evaluation of client progress.

Clients' rights to confidentiality must be respected and maintained within legal limits. A more complex issue arises, however, when correspondence is received or information is provided by parents/carers that is not directly about the child/young person or that refers to circumstances that are outside the context of the service being provided by the Gatehouse. Issues such as ownership of the information and the privacy of other named individuals needs to be considered.

The Gatehouse recognises the potential for client records to be subpoenaed for court purpose and also under the Freedom of Information Legislation.

## 2. Persons Affected

All Gatehouse staff.

## 3. Responsibility

Gatehouse Centre Manager and Executive Committee

## 4. Procedure

- The principles of the RCH policy on Privacy should be explained to all parents/carers when they first attend to receive a service from the Gatehouse Centre. This should be repeated when counselling for either the child/young person or parent/carer begins. Limits of confidentiality and the possibility of information being subpoenaed should be explained.
- All correspondence/information directly relating to the child/young person must be included in the client's file.
- Correspondence that relates to the parent/carer should be stored in the parent/carer file. If appropriate a reference to the receipt of the correspondence may be noted in the child/young person's file.

Women & Children's Health	<b>POLICY:</b>	<b>Policy No:</b>
	Issue Date: 09.02.14	Issue Date: 09.02.14
Gatehouse Centre (for the Assessment & Treatment of Child Abuse)		Review Date: 09.02.15
		Page 2 of 2

- When parents/carers provide information that is not directly related to the child/young person they should be reminded of the possible consequences of storing this information on their file. Should they decide that the information is to be stored on the file a note pertaining to this discussion should be included in the file notes. Should they decide that the information is NOT to be stored on the file, the counsellor should discuss with the parent how the information will be noted and or used.

E.g.1 Sighted mother's affidavit re current family court proceedings.

E.g.2 Sighted correspondence between mother and father that indicates ongoing conflict between parents.

- If matters sighted in such correspondence/information are used to inform the counsellor's assessment, this should be noted in the assessment report.
- Where there is no parent/carer file and the parent/carer wishes for the information to be stored on the child/young person's file, the parent/carer should be informed that a reference to the sighting of the material and the nature of its content can be made on the file (as in the examples above) but that the information itself will not be stored in the child/young person's file and will be returned to the parent/carer. Discussion regarding this should include reference to the potential consequences of the child/young person having access to this information in the future should they activate an FOI request.
- Where information provided includes correspondence from another person to the parent/carer the issue of that person's consent for the correspondence to be shown to the counsellor/stored on file should be discussed.

## 5. Other Relevant References

Confidentiality of Client Information Policy

Client Records Policy

The Privacy of Your Personal Information – RCH brochure