

# Women's Refuge Privacy Statement

## Important information about your privacy

### Collection of information

The National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR), usually known as Women's Refuge is a national organisation which provides advice, assistance and direct support to women and children experiencing Family Violence through our member refuges. In this statement, we will refer to both the NCIWR and member refuges as "we" or "us".

We know your privacy is important to you. We have processes in place to ensure that when you contact us or use our services in any way, we meet our obligations to you under the Privacy Act 2020. Your information can only be accessed by authorised staff and is protected against unauthorised use, modification, access, or disclosure.

All our staff have signed a confidentiality agreement. National Office and local refuge staff and volunteers must also comply with their professional and ethical obligations of confidence.

When you call us or use our services it is important that you understand how we manage your information. We explain below how we do that.

### How we collect and use your information

We usually collect personal information directly from you when you contact us by any method; including telephone, text, email, web chat, or written correspondence. This may include your name, gender, ethnicity, date of birth, contact details and other information which will help us provide you with the right support according to your needs. We may also check our records to make sure that we have identified you correctly if you have used our services before.

When you contact us to make a donation, we will retain only your name and email address. We will use this information only to contact you with newsletters and information about Appeals. We will not pass on or sell your personal information to any other person or company.

We sometimes collect or receive information from a third party, for example from a member of your family/whanau or from someone who is looking after you. If someone contacts us on behalf of another person, we also collect the name and contact details of the person contacting us.

Information collected by member refuges will be supplied to the NCIWR as part of its funding and governance role.

We collect and use your information to enable us to provide you with the best advice possible to ensure your safety and that of your children. This includes providing you with information about other services, and with your agreement, may include connecting you to other services. In order for us to do this, and to make safe decisions, we collect and use your information for a number of purposes:

- Firstly, we collect and use it to make sure that we assess your needs properly.
- We use it to match your previous records and visits to our services if you have contacted us before. You may not be able to remember all the details of your last contact, and we may be able to look up information that is relevant.
- If you give us permission to refer you to another service provider, we pass relevant information on to that provider so you don't have to repeat all the details to them and they have all necessary information about you.
- We may need to pass on information to Oranga Tamariki or the Police if we believe that you or your children are in danger.
- On occasion we may need to speak to you to provide you with further information, support and advice.

You can choose not to provide information to us. However, if you choose not to provide relevant information to us this may affect our ability to give you the best possible service. If you don't want to give us any information about yourself, or only provide limited information, we will give you the best service we can using the information you do provide.

We will not contact you by any means unless you have told us you are happy for us to do so. The only exception to this may be if we believe there is a risk of serious harm to you or any other person, or in an emergency situation when we may call you back on the number you called us.

If we do try to contact you, and we can't get hold of you, we will not leave a detailed text or voice message.

## **Surveys and feedback**

We sometimes ask people for feedback on the services they have received from us. If you call us when we are carrying out one of these surveys you will hear a statement in our phone message, advising that we may text you to ask for feedback. If you tell us that you do not want to participate in a survey, we will not send you a text.

If you do participate in a survey, you will be sent a text with a link to a website, where you can provide feedback. All survey feedback is anonymous, and we have no way of linking the text we sent you to anything recorded on the website. Of course, if you would like to discuss your feedback further you are welcome to provide us with your contact details.

## **Recordings**

We record telephone calls to the Crisisline to help ensure that the advice we give meets the highest standards of safety and quality. We keep these recordings for three months and then they are destroyed.

People who contact Women's Refuge may be in life threatening situations or experiencing acute distress. In order to respond effectively, we have removed any time delays and intrusive processes that detail why we collect information and how we use it. For this reason there are no messages about recordings on our telephone services or via text, email and webchat. This is similar to the way emergency services such as the Police and ambulance services operate.

We record calls on most of our service lines to:

- Enable the staff member who is in contact with you to focus on your situation and giving you the support you need.
- Make contact with you if we lose the call and/or if we are concerned about your safety or the safety of anyone else.
- Help us improve our services to you by undertaking quality, audit, training and risk management processes.

These recordings are stored securely. The recordings are only accessed by the clinical staff providing services to you or for carrying out quality assurance, training, audit or risk management activities to enable us to ensure that the services we provide are safe and effective. We may also use the recordings to ensure we can appropriately investigate and manage a complaint.

We do not record other telephone consultations.

## **Who we may share your information with**

Where you, or someone concerned about you, has contacted us we may provide limited information to an appropriate agency in order for the agency to contact you or the caller to offer you support or advice if you would like it.

In other situations, where you have given us permission to refer you to another service provider we may share relevant information with this provider where we think it is important for continuity of care and so that you can receive appropriate and seamless services. In this case we will seek your permission before sharing any information with the other provider unless it is not practicable to do so.

We will only share your information for other purposes where we are permitted or required by law. This might include:

- Disclosing relevant information where that is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to someone's life, health or safety or a threat to public health or safety.
- For quality assurance, audit and complaint management as set out below.

When we disclose your personal information to third parties, we make all reasonable efforts to ensure we disclose only relevant information and that it is accurate, complete and up to date.

We will not sell or rent your identifiable information to anyone, including any insurance or commercial company, without your express permission.

## **Quality assurance, audit, research, managing complaints and training**

We undertake quality assurance and monitoring of our services to ensure that we provide you the best service possible, and that the decisions we make are sound. In order for us to be able to do this, staff responsible for training, monitoring and improving the quality of our services, undertaking audits, or investigating and managing complaints, may access and use your information for these purposes.

The NCIWR provide services in conjunction with local refuges and other services and on occasion we may undertake quality assurance or service improvement activities jointly with the other service. Where we do this, and where practicable, we use non-identifiable information. However, at times to ensure the services we are providing meet expected quality standards it may be necessary to share identifiable information with the other provider. Where we do this we ensure confidentiality agreements are in place with the other provider and that your information is only used for the purposes of the quality assurance or service improvement activity.

## **Information that does not identify you**

We provide non-identifiable information to the Ministry of Social Development and other organisations that fund many of our existing services and help with the development of new services. We do not disclose your name, or address when we pass on data like this.

We work with universities and research organisations, and from time to time we invite people using our services to take part in research. It is always your choice whether to take part in research and your decision has no impact on the services we provide. If you do want to take part, we provide your name and contact details to the researchers who will contact you directly.

## **Storage of information**

Women's Refuge and local affiliated refuges have systems and procedures in place to protect your information from misuse and loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Your information is stored securely in a Government-approved data centre, and is accessed only by staff providing services to you, or in the course of carrying out service quality reviews and audits. Staff all sign confidentiality agreements when they join us, and there are systems and policies in place to prevent them sharing data inappropriately.

## **If you want to see a copy of your information**

If you want to check information that we hold about you, please see below for contact details. We will ask you to provide evidence that you are in fact the person whose information you are requesting, or that you are entitled to this information.

Sometimes it may not be possible to give you a copy of all the information if it contains details about other people, or if it would be unsafe to provide the information in that it may lead to harm being done to another person. If we refuse to provide you with access to your record or to update your record in the way you request, we will tell you of our reasons for refusal. If you want us to do so we will attach a statement from you of the correction sought to your record.

We will not charge you a fee for requesting a copy of your information unless we have already provided you with the same or substantially the same information within the last 12 months.

If you believe any information we hold about you is incorrect you can ask us to correct it. We will either make the correction or explain to you why we are not prepared to do so. In that case you may ask for a statement of your views to be placed on your record.

## **Making a complaint**

If you have a privacy complaint or concern, especially if you think your privacy has been affected or you wish to complain about our refusal to update or grant access to your information, you should contact us as detailed below for an examination of your complaint.

### **Contact our Privacy Officer about privacy-related matters:**

#### **Privacy Officer**

Email: [info@refuge.org.nz](mailto:info@refuge.org.nz)

Phone: [04 802 5078](tel:048025078)

Address: National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges Inc. (NCIWR)

PO Box 27-078

WELLINGTON 6141

If after that you are still unhappy, you can complain to the Privacy Commissioner. See [www.privacy.org.nz](http://www.privacy.org.nz) for how to make a complaint.