



## **BEACON Confidentiality Policy**

- Clients and BEACON volunteers have a right to confidentiality.
- BEACON staff and project leaders will keep all printed personal information relating to volunteers and clients in a secure place. Under the current Data Protection Acts volunteers have the right to request access to personal information held on them.
- All personal client information belongs to BEACON and must not be disclosed to another individual or organisation without the express consent of the client and the relevant project leader. *Exceptions to this* would be where failure to pass on the information to a relevant other would place the client or another person at significant risk (for example threat of suicide or violence), or where it appears that a serious crime has been committed. It is particularly important not to disclose client information to others from the same country of origin. If a volunteer is in any doubt whether to share information or not, they should wherever possible check with their project leader.
- Confidential or sensitive matters must not be discussed in public places, or in the presence of other clients.
- If a client asks whether they can discuss something in confidence with a volunteer, it should be explained to them that volunteers have a duty to pass on certain information (see exceptions above).
- Volunteers must not share sensitive personal information of their own with clients.
- Volunteers must not keep any confidential printed or handwritten client information for longer than is absolutely necessary. Once it is no longer needed it must be shredded or returned to the project leader or BEACON office. Whilst such information is still in use it must be securely stored in the volunteer's home (preferably in a locked place), and never left in an unattended car.