

National LGBT Helpline Confidentiality policy

The NHP (National Helpline Project) takes caller confidentiality very seriously and we aim to create a trusting relationship between helpline users and helpline volunteers.

Callers' personal details are never collected or shared with third parties unless consent has been given, and only on a 'need to know' basis.

We do not pass on caller details unless this has been agreed with the caller.

Exceptions to this are detailed below and are made only where there is a potential risk to the caller or others and/or where required by law.

NHP will not discuss details of specific calls with any third party, however for publicity or reporting purposes we may refer to general themes relating to calls, such as domestic violence.

Callers to the helpline are free to speak to volunteers anonymously or using a pseudonym if they wish.

Our telephone system does not reveal the caller's telephone number.

Voicemail messages or emails for specific members of staff or volunteers will be forwarded to the relevant person. Clear consent is not sought in these cases but is automatically presumed due to the nature of the enquiry.

Email correspondence is kept securely and electronically and will be forwarded only where necessary. For example, a fundraising query will be forwarded to the Fundraising team.

Our telephone system produces call data about the calls we receive. Statistical information relating to calls is collected for managerial and supervisory purposes and may be shared widely. However, this data is collated anonymously.

If a caller makes a complaint – the caller's personal details will be kept long enough to ensure the complaint is dealt with and to ensure the safety and welfare of callers and volunteers.

All data is managed within the terms of the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003.

All information relating to a caller is confidential to NHP unless:

- A caller is perceived as presenting a serious and immediate risk to others.
- A call seems to indicate abuse of any kind to children.
- We are passed information about acts of terrorism or bomb warnings
- We have informed consent from the caller to pass on information
- We call an ambulance because a caller appears to be incapable of making rational decisions for him or herself
- We receive a court order requiring us to divulge information
- A caller attacks or threatens volunteers
- A caller deliberately prevents the service from being delivered to other callers
- The information is already in the public domain
- The information is in the form of a summary or collection of information so framed that it is not possible to ascertain from it information relating to any particular person

NHP does not record telephone calls. Occasionally, and only for the purpose of training or monitoring and evaluating our service, a member of the management team of NHP may listen to the call by using an additional earpiece. The purpose of this is to ensure that we are providing a quality service to our callers.

The web site

Our website does not use cookies, apart from temporary "session" cookies which enable a visitor's web browser to remember which pages on this website have already been visited. Visitors can use our website with no loss of functionality if cookies are disabled from the web browser.

Technical details in connection with visits to our website are logged by our Internet service provider for our statistical purposes. No information is collected that could be used by us to identify website visitors. The technical details logged are confined to the following items:

- The IP address of the visitor's web server
- The top-level domain name used (for example .ie, .com, .org, .net)
- The previous website address from which the visitor reached us, including any search terms used
- Clickstream data which shows the traffic of visitors around this web site (for example pages accessed and documents downloaded)
- The type of web browser used by the website visitor.

The NHP will make no attempt to identify individual visitors, or to associate the technical details listed above with any individual. It is the policy of the NHP never to disclose such technical information in respect of individual website

visitors to any third party (apart from our internet service provider, which records such data on our behalf and which is bound by confidentiality provisions in this regard), unless obliged to disclose such information by a rule of law. The technical information will be used only by the NHP, and only for statistical and other administrative purposes. You should note that technical details, which we cannot associate with any identifiable individual, do not constitute "personal data" for the purposes of the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act regulates when and how an individual's 'personal data' may be obtained, held, used, disclosed and generally processed. It applies to computerised processing of personal data and certain paper based files and records.

To comply with the law, information must be collected and used fairly, stored securely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. To do this, the NHP must comply with the Data Protection Principles, which are set out in the Data Protection Acts. In summary, these state that personal data shall be:

1. Obtained and processed fairly
2. Kept only for specified and lawful purposes
3. Processed only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to us initially
4. Kept safe and secure
5. Kept accurate and up to date
6. Adequate, relevant and not excessive
7. Retained no longer than it is necessary
8. Provided as a copy to any individual to whom the personal data relates, on request

Glossary of technical terms used

web browser - The piece of software you use to read web pages. Examples are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator and Opera.

IP address - The identifying details for your computer (or your internet company's computer), expressed in "internet protocol" code (for example 192.168.72.34). Every computer connected to the web has a unique IP address, although the address may not be the same every time a connection is made.

cookies - Small pieces of information, stored in simple text files, placed on your computer by a web site. Cookies can be read by the web site on your

subsequent visits. The information stored in a cookie may relate to your browsing habits on the web page, or a unique identification number so that the web site can "remember" you on your return visit. Generally speaking, cookies do not contain personal information from which you can be identified, unless you have furnished such information to the web site.

