

Kings Heath Residents Forum

Data Protection Policy

This policy applies to all Committee members and volunteers of Kings Heath Residents Forum.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to enable Kings Heath Residents Forum to:

- comply with the law in respect of the data it holds about individuals;
- follow good practice;
- protect Kings Heath Residents Forum clients, Committee members, volunteers and other individuals
- protect the organisation from the consequences of a breach of its responsibilities.

Brief introduction to Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act gives individuals the right to know what information is held about them. It provides a framework to ensure that personal information is handled properly.

The Act works in two ways. Firstly, it states that anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles, which make sure that personal information is:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and up to date
- not kept for longer than is necessary
- processed in line with the rights of Data Subjects
- secure
- not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

The second area covered by the Act provides individuals with important rights, including the right to find out what personal information is held on computer and most paper records.

Policy statement

Kings Heath Residents Forum will:

- comply with both the law and good practice
- respect individuals' rights
- be open and honest with individuals whose data is held
- provide training and support for staff and volunteers who handle personal data, so that they can act confidently and consistently

Kings Heath Residents Forum recognises that its first priority under the Data Protection Act is to avoid causing harm to individuals. Information about staff, volunteers and clients will be used fairly, securely and not disclosed to any person unlawfully.

Secondly, the Act aims to ensure that the legitimate concerns of individuals about the ways in which their data may be used are taken into account. In addition to being open and transparent, Kings Heath Residents Forum will seek to give individuals as much choice as is possible and reasonable over what data is held and how it is used.

Definitions

The Data Subject is the individual whose personal data is being processed. Examples include:

- volunteers
- donors
- users
- suppliers

Processing means the use made of personal data including:

- obtaining and retrieving
- holding and storing
- making available within or outside the organisation
- printing, sorting, matching, comparing, destroying.

The Data Controller is the legal 'person', or organisation, that decides why and how personal data is to be processed. The Data Controller is responsible for complying with the Data Protection Act.

The Data Protection Officer is the name given to the person in organisations who is the central point of contact for all data compliance issues.

Responsibilities

The Committee recognises its overall responsibility for ensuring that Kings Heath Residents Forum complies with its legal obligations.

The Data Protection Officer is currently the Chair, who has the following responsibilities:

- briefing the Committee on data protection responsibilities
- reviewing data protection and related policies
- advising on data protection issues
- electronic security
- approving data protection-related statements on publicity materials and letters

Each Kings Heath Residents Forum Committee member and volunteer who handles personal data will comply with the organisation's operational procedures for handling personal data to ensure that good data protection practice is established and followed.

All volunteers are expected to read, understand and accept any policies and procedures that relate to the personal data they may handle in the course of Kings Heath Residents Forum activities.

Security

Any recorded information on clients, volunteers and Committee members will be:

- protected by the use of passwords if kept on computer
- destroyed confidentially if it is no longer needed

Access to information on the main database is controlled by a password and only those needing access are given the password.

Data Recording and storage

Kings Heath Residents Forum aims to have a single database holding basic information about all volunteers and stakeholders.

Kings Heath Residents Forum will regularly review its procedures for ensuring that its records remain accurate and consistent and, in particular:

- the database system is reviewed and re-designed, where necessary, to encourage and facilitate the entry of accurate data.
- data on any individual will be held in as few places as necessary, and all Committee members and volunteers will be discouraged from establishing unnecessary additional data sets.
- effective procedures are in place so that all relevant systems are updated when information about any individual changes.
- data will be corrected if shown to be inaccurate

Access to data

All volunteers, clients and stakeholders have the right to request access to all information stored about them.

Transparency

Kings Heath Residents Forum is committed to ensuring that in principle Data Subjects are aware that their data is being processed and

- for what purpose it is being processed
- what types of disclosure are likely and
- how to exercise their rights in relation to the data.

Data Subjects will generally be informed in the following ways:

- Volunteers: in the volunteer welcome/support pack
- Clients: when they request (on paper, on line or by phone) services

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed in 2015 by the Kings Heath Residents Forum. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

This policy was approved by the Kings Heath Residents Forum Committee on 8 September 2013.