

## **POLICY ON THE SECURE HANDLING, USE, STORAGE, RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF DISCLOSURE INFORMATION (Northern Ireland)**

### **General Principles**

As an organisation using AccessNI Disclosure Certificates to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Field Studies Council complies fully with AccessNI's Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure Applications and Disclosure information. We also comply fully with obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislative requirements with regards to the safe handling, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure Information.

### **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed. We recognise it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

### **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

### **Storage and Access**

Disclosure information is kept securely, in lockable, non-portable storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

### **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant appointment, regulatory or licensing) decision has been taken, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is necessary. We comply with AccessNI's Code of Practice requirement to ensure that it is not retained longer than is required for the specific purpose of taking a decision on the applicant's suitability. Disclosure certificates will be returned to the applicant once a decision, recruitment or otherwise has been made and will be retained no longer than the agreed period.

### **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any unsecured receptacle (e.g. waste-bin or confidential sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure or any other relevant non-conviction information supplied by police. However, despite the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the AccessNI unique reference number of the Disclosure Certificate and the details of the recruitment decision.