

2.12. Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure

Policy Code	CSP002.17
Person Responsible	Director
Status (Draft/Released)	Released
Date Last Updated	20.10.22

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To ensure that management of personal information for clients meets all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

This policy and procedure applies to current and potential clients, their carers and family members.

2.0 RISK

People with disabilities are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than others in the community, workers with access to client information automatically occupy risk-assessed roles under the NDIS Commission.

The primary risk to privacy and confidentiality arises from the collection, storage and sharing of client information. Access by non-authorized persons may expose clients to risk. Safe storage and access policy protects clients from abuse and exploitation. This policy addresses these issues.

There is a risk that information will be shared inadvertently and without the intention to do harm.

Information may be unintentionally disclosed by careless use of tablet- or phone-based software, shared with a client's supporters against the client's wishes, or disclosed to peers on the assumption that the information is publicly known. Cultural assumptions around sharing information are diverse and change rapidly. This risk may be minimised by:

- raising staff awareness of privacy and confidentiality
- ensuring consent is obtained before gathering data (including audio and photographic data)
- ensuring that consent is specific to the use of data, and that consent is current
- encouraging clients to provide feedback and complaints about the use of their information.

These issues are addressed in this policy.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Personal information – Recorded information (including images) or opinion, whether true or not, from which the identity (including those up to thirty years deceased) could be reasonably ascertained.

Sensitive information – Information or an opinion about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of a political party, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, sexual preference or practices, or criminal record. This is also considered to be personal information.

Health information – Any information or an opinion about the physical, mental or psychological health or ability (at any time) of an individual.

Information Privacy – refers to the control of the collection, use, disclosure and disposal of information and the individual's right to control how their personal information is handled.

4.0 POLICY

Peninsula Speech Plus is committed to the transparent management of personal and health information about its clients and staff.

This commitment includes protecting the privacy of personal information, in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) set out in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwlth)* amended by the *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cwlth)* and in accordance with the *Privacy Policy*, Department of Human Services, endorsed June 2002 (amended August 2005) (Vic), the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*, the *Information Privacy Act (2000) (Vic)*, and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cwlth)*.

Peninsula Speech Plus's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure* is made publicly available.

5.0 PROCEDURE

Personal information

- Personal information may include:
 - name,
 - date of birth,
 - gender,
 - current and previous addresses,
 - residency status,
 - telephone numbers and e-mail addresses,
 - bank account details,
 - tax file number,
 - driver's licence number,
 - Centrelink information,
 - photographs,
 - race or ethnicity, and
 - medical history or information provided by a health service.
 - Relevant information collected as part of provision of psychological services
- In collecting personal information, Peninsula Speech Plus will inform the client:
 - that information is being collected;
 - the purposes for collection;
 - who will have access to the information;
 - the right to seek access to, and/or correct, the information; and
 - the right to make complaint or appeal decisions about the handling of their information.
- Client information is used to:
 - Assess, diagnose and provide services according to a client's presenting issues
 - administer and manage those services;
 - evaluate and improve those services;

- document what happens in sessions to enable clinicians to provide a relevant and informed service
- contribute to research;
- contact family, carers, or other third parties if required; and
- meet our obligations under the NDIS.
- Means of information collection
 - Personal information is collected in a number of ways including:
 - client provides information directly to Peninsula Speech Plus using hardcopy forms
 - correspondence via email
 - client interaction directly with Peninsula Speech Plus employees
 - via referrals, correspondence and medical reports.

Client Consent

- Clients are to be provided with the *Client Consent Form* at the time of commencing service with Peninsula Speech Plus. This form is to be
 - signed and placed in the client’s file;
 - held securely with access limited to team members in the performance of their role.
 - If a client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this Privacy Policy, Peninsula Speech Plus may not be in a position to provide the service to the client. In some circumstances, clients may request to be anonymous or to use a pseudonym, unless it is impracticable or required/authorised by law to deal with identified individuals

Updating Client Information

- To ensure that client information is accurate, complete, current, relevant and not misleading, Peninsula Speech Plus checks personal details and updates client files accordingly:
 - whenever reviewing a client’s service; and / or
 - upon being informed of changes or inaccuracies by clients or other stakeholders
- There will be no charge for any correction of personal information.
- Where Peninsula Speech Plus has previously disclosed client personal information to other parties, should the client request us to notify these parties of any change to their details, we must take reasonable steps to do so.

Collection and Storage of Personal Information.

- Peninsula Speech Plus collects information:
 - directly from clients orally or in writing;
 - from third parties, such as medical practitioners, government agencies, client representatives, carer/s, and other health service providers;
 - from client referrals; and
 - from publicly available sources of information.
- Peninsula Speech Plus will collect sensitive information:
 - only with client consent, unless an exemption applies: e.g. the collection is required by law, court/tribunal order or is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to life or health;

- fairly, lawfully, and non-intrusively;
- directly from client, if doing so is reasonable and practicable;
- only where deemed necessary to support:
 - service delivery to clients;
 - staff activities and functions; and
 - giving the client the option of interacting anonymously, if lawful and practicable.
- Peninsula Speech Plus takes all reasonable steps to protect personal information against loss, interference, misuse, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. Peninsula Speech Plus will destroy, or permanently de-identify personal information that is
 - no longer needed;
 - unsolicited and could not have been obtained directly; or
 - not required to be retained by, or under, an Australian law or a court/tribunal order.
- Peninsula Speech Plus has appropriate security measures in place to protect stored electronic and hard-copy materials. Peninsula Speech Plus has an archiving process for client files which ensures files are securely and confidentially stored and destroyed in due course.
- Access to the files of clients receiving Psychology services through Peninsula Speech Plus is restricted to the treating Psychologist only. If access to the information is required in the absence of treating psychologists, other psychologists on the team or the Directors of the business will access this information.

At any stage clients may request to see and correct the personal information about them kept on file. The Psychologist may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Disclosing information

- Peninsula Speech Plus respects the right to privacy and confidentiality, and will not disclose personal information except:
 - where disclosure would protect the client and / or others;
 - where necessary for best service practice; or
 - where subpoenaed by court or obligated by law.
 - For clients accessing Psychology services where failure to disclose the information would in the reasonable belief of the Psychologist, place a client or another person at serious risk to life, health or safety
- For these purposes, Peninsula Speech Plus may disclose clients' personal information to other people, organisations or service providers, including:
 - medical and allied health service providers who assist with the services we provide to clients;
 - a 'person responsible' if the client is unable to give or communicate consent e.g. next of kin, carer, or guardian;
 - the client's authorised representative/s e.g. legal adviser;
 - our professional advisers, e.g. lawyers, accountants, auditors;

- government and regulatory authorities, e.g. Centrelink, government departments, and the Australian Taxation Office;
- organisations undertaking research where information is relevant to public health or public safety; and
- when required or authorised by law.
- Peninsula Speech Plus may where the client's prior permission has been obtained
 - provide a written report to another agency or professional, e.g., a GP or a lawyer; or
 - discuss the material with another person, e.g. a parent, employer, health provider, or third party funder; or
 - disclose the information in another way; or
 - disclose to another professional or agency (e.g. your GP) and disclosure of your personal information to that third party is for a purpose which is directly related to the primary purpose for which your personal information was collected
- Any information released for evaluation or research purposes will be de-identified.
- Clients' personal information will not be used, sold, rented or disclosed for any other purpose.

Accessing personal information

- Clients can request and be granted access to their personal information, subject to exceptions allowed by law.
- Requests to access personal information must state:
 - the information to be accessed
 - the preferred means of accessing the information,
 - and should be forwarded to the Directors either verbally, or in writing to:

Mornington office
 16/1140 Nepean Highway, Mornington
 Hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm; Sat 9am to 1pm

Frankston office
 16 Davey Street, Frankston
 (entry is from the rear via Bay Lane)
 Hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm

Dromana office
 1 12-13 Trewitt Ct
 Dromana Vic 3936
 Hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm

Phone (03) 5975 1500
 Fax (03) 5975 1505
admin@peninsulaspeech.com.au

- The Directors will assess the request to access information, taking into consideration current issues

that may exist with the client, and whether these issues relate to any lawful exceptions to granting access to personal information.

- If necessary an appointment can be made for clarification purposes.
- Should access be granted, the Directors will contact the client within 5 business days of receipt of the request to arrange access to their personal information.
- Should the Directors decide that access to personal information will be denied, they must, within 5 business days of receipt of the request, inform the client in writing of:
 - the reasons for denying access and
 - the mechanisms available to complain or appeal.
- Should Peninsula Speech Plus be unable to provide the information in the means requested, the Directors will discuss with the client alternative means of accessing their personal information.
- Reasonable charges and fees, incurred by Peninsula Speech Plus in providing the data as requested, may be passed on to the client.

Complaints

- Questions or concerns about Peninsula Speech Plus's privacy practices should be brought, in the first instance, to the Directors' attention.
- Clients may directly email the Directors at admin@peninsulaspeech.com.au
- In investigating the complaint Peninsula Speech Plus may, where necessary, contact the client making the complaint to obtain more information.
- The client will be advised either in writing, or in a face to face meeting, of the outcomes and actions arising from the investigation.
- If concerns cannot be resolved and clients wish to formally complain about how their personal information is managed, or if they believe Peninsula Speech Plus has breached an APP and/or IPP, they may send their concerns in writing to:
 - Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
Email: privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 666 444

or through the online form available at

<https://www.cdpd.vic.gov.au/menu-privacy/privacy-public/privacy-public-make-complaint>

Breaches of Privacy

- Should a breach in privacy occur (unauthorised access, computer system hacked, laptop stolen disclosure or loss of a clients personal information) Peninsula Speech Plus will immediately activate its data breach plan and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any risk of consequential serious harm.
- Peninsula Speech Plus are required to disclose a data breach to the Office of Australian Information Commissioner if the data contains personal information that is likely to result in "serious harm", which includes any of the following: physical, psychological, financial or reputational harm. Personal information is information about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably

identifiable.

- Any staff who identify a potential breach must immediately inform their line manager, who must report to the Directors for further action.

POLICY AMENDMENT		
Date	Description	Authorised by
21/12/2021	New Policy	Director
20/12/22	Updated to include Psychology Services	Director