

## **Data Protection and Information Security essentials**

### **Why do I need to know this?**

We all need to protect personal data in the best way we can. At Guide Dogs, everyone has a responsibility to use individuals' personal data/information in an appropriate way, to keep it safe in line with legislation. This document will give you an overview of what is meant by data protection and information security, and provides examples and tips you can use, to help keep information safe when volunteering.

### **What is Personal Data?**

Everyone has personal data, it's information about who people are, where they live, what they do, and more. It can be any information that helps identify someone, for example:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address, including an individual's work email
- Date of birth
- A photograph or video

**Special Category Data** also known as 'sensitive' data, has stronger legal protection and we need to be careful when sharing, because people could be at higher risk if this information is shared incorrectly. Special category data includes a person's racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, political opinions, sexual orientation, health information or criminal record.

### **Data Protection**

Data protection law gives people rights over their personal information, and provides a set of rules on how organisations, like Guide Dogs and their volunteers and staff can use this data.

Thinking about how we handle individuals' personal information when volunteering, should be at the forefront of our minds. This could be for example, when we email others in our fundraising group, plan an event, or make note of an address to visit someone's home. It might be helpful to think of it in terms of your own data, how would you feel if your information was being used in a particular way, or wasn't being kept as secure as it could be?

## **How you can protect personal data:**

- Always keep digital information up to date and accurate.
- Keep printed information in a secure place.
- Permanently delete or securely destroy personal information as soon as you have finished with it. This also applies to any duplicates, paper or backup copies that have been created.
- If you need to share someone's information with another person, get their consent first.
- Do not discuss or repeat information about others if unauthorised people could hear your conversation.
- Report data breaches (if information is shared when it shouldn't be or has been lost).
- Always follow Guide Dogs procedures for keeping and sharing personal data (a link to procedures is provided in this document).

## **Ask yourself these questions before sending an email:**

- Are the recipient's email addresses correct?
- Is the information and attachments relevant and appropriate for all the recipients to receive?
- Should I send individual emails, rather than one email to a group of people?
- Should I use the BCC field to hide recipients' email addresses?

If email recipients need different information, then send separate tailored emails.

If the information is relevant to all, but you're not sure if all recipients have consented to share their email addresses with the others, e.g. volunteers within a fundraising group, then use the BCC field. Using BCC hides email addresses, ensuring confidentiality within the email chain. This means no-one's email address is shared with the others without their permission and the only person to receive replies will be you, the sender.

## **What should you do if personal information is accidentally shared?**

Sometimes mistakes happen. If you lose any personal information, or share it with the wrong person by mistake, the key thing is to let someone at Guide Dogs know about it immediately, so steps can be taken to put things right. You can contact your manager or email our team at

[DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk)

## Information Security

It's also important to protect your devices by keeping software up to date and recognising potential cyber-attacks. Information you keep on your devices is valuable to cyber criminals, and your email and social media accounts could be used to attack others, including Guide Dogs.

### How you can keep your devices secure:

- Enable and use multi factor authentication - use two or more verification methods to gain access, for example using a password and a one-time code that's sent to your device to enable a login.
- Make sure your devices auto lock after a brief period of inactivity.
- If you walk away from your device, make sure to lock it, even if you only plan to leave it unattended for a short while.
- Be aware of who could view personal information on your screen from over your shoulder, including people in your home.
- Avoid sharing your device with others, but if this isn't possible, consider creating another profile and/or password protecting areas of your device where high-risk applications or information is stored.
- Use secure, strong, unique passwords for each application or login. Password manager applications are widely available on all devices and are an easy way to create and store complex passwords.
- Do not automatically connect to public Wi-Fi networks, such as in coffee shops and on public transport. Public Wi-Fi is notorious for poor security and surveillance opportunities.
- Only download apps from official play stores and ensure they are configured to auto update with the latest security patches.
- Update your device operating system with the latest security software provided by the manufacturer. To protect your device, you should ensure these are set to automatically update and follow any prompts to update the device when asked to do so.

### Be aware of phishing attempts via emails, texts or calls:

- If you feel something is wrong, trust your instincts. It's safest not to open the email, click the link, or share details on a call.
- Slow down and keep your emotions in check before rushing to respond to a caller, an email or open a link. To compel targets to act, criminals appeal to strong emotions like shock, anger, curiosity, fear, and try to create a sense of urgency.
- Look for misspellings and unusual email addresses or phone numbers, which may indicate the contact is not genuine.

- AI software can create realistic voice/video calls, spoof emails and phone numbers and even imitate family, making it difficult to distinguish between genuine and fraudulent communications. Signs include urgency, awkward pauses, a flat voice, or mispronunciation.

### **What you can do if you think your device is compromised.**

- Log out of all online accounts.
- Disconnect from the internet, including mobile data.
- End the phone/video call.
- Scan for malware and viruses.
- Remove any suspicious apps.
- Reset passwords.
- If all else fails, you may need to factory reset the device and contact your service provider.
- Alert others, including Guide Dogs, and let them know that your email and social media accounts may be compromised.

### **Summary**

All volunteers need to comply with Data Protection legislation when handling people's personal information. If your voluntary role involves regularly processing personal data or the use of Guide Dogs systems, we will be in touch, as there is some additional training for these roles.

Use this link to access [policies and procedures](#) on VIP.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question:** I accidentally copied a friend into a Guide Dogs fundraising group email, only meant for other volunteers. What should I do?

**Answer:** As you've shared everyone's email addresses with another unrelated party when consent wasn't granted, you need to ask all recipients of the email (by BCC or through separate emails) to delete all copies of the first email you sent. Let Guide Dogs know about the incident by contacting the Data Protection Team at [DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk) and informing your manager.

**Question:** I have been emailed the personal details of a volunteer or service user as part of my volunteer role, is this allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, as you need this for your role. When you no longer require these details, you must permanently delete the information.

**Question:** I have personal information about a volunteer/service user on paper (e.g. on a sticky note, or a list of names). Is this allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, if you need the information to carry out your role. Please

ensure it is stored in a secure place. If you no longer need it, it should be securely destroyed. If it gets lost or stolen, immediately report it to the Data Protection Team.

**Question:** I have been given the details of a person at a local school as a key point of contact. Is this personal data?

**Answer:** Yes, it is, despite being a work contact, it is information that relates to a person; therefore, counts as their personal data. Keep it secure and delete/securely destroy the information after the event.

**Question:** I've taken a few photos of people, whilst volunteering for Guide Dogs at an event, is this ok to share?

**Answer:** You must have people's consent before you take a photo, video or quote of them, and need to get their permission to share it by asking them to complete a Guide Dogs publicity consent form. To discuss photography in crowded places, or if you need a copy of this form, please contact your volunteer manager. Review the Social Media Policy on the VIP. Good practice would be to make a note of the date when consent was granted, and where the photo has been saved or shared, in case the person withdraws consent in the future.

**Question:** I've lost my phone, it had emails about my volunteering on it, including service user or volunteer's information. What should I do?

**Answer:** Contact your service provider to block the SIM card, change your passwords on all important accounts, and contact the [DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk) and follow their instructions.

**Question:** I clicked on a link and now my personal email has been hacked, it contained emails from other volunteers, what should I do?

**Answer:** Change your password, then immediately contact the [DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@guidedogs.org.uk) and follow their instructions.

**Question:** Whilst volunteering in my role for Guide Dogs, a service user has said they would like to know what information Guide Dogs has about them. What do I do?

**Answer:** If anyone asks you this, verbally or in writing, let them know you will pass their contact details on. Contact your volunteer manager or the Data Protection Team without delay, as we have a brief time to reply by law. Don't forget to destroy/delete the contact details after you have passed them on.

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