

# Confidentiality and Ethical Policy

Staff members have a responsibility to safeguard the confidentiality of enquirers and informants and to record any information received from them accurately.

All personal information given by enquirers is treated as strictly confidential unless the persons concerned give permission for it to be made available to others.

It should be noted that Inform does not enjoy legal privilege. This means that it is not protected by law from disclosure (the withholding of information), However, Inform has fought (successfully) in a court of law to protect the anonymity of its informants.

As far as possible, staff should obtain the freely given, informed consent of people who are potential sources of information for Inform. This implies a responsibility to explain in appropriate detail - and in terms that are meaningful to informants - what the request for information is about, and how any information might be stored and used.

Enquirers and informants should be informed how far they will be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. They may also be asked whether they are willing to accept the use of data-gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras when appropriate.

In the case of extremely sensitive information, Inform staff must consult with the Director or other members of the Management Committee to decide whether special procedures are required.

When staff access data held in Inform's files, they must respect the terms on which the data were collected and the limitations, if any, that are imposed on their use.