

Data Protection Policy

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Introduction

Quest needs to keep certain information about its employees, consultants, suppliers and others to allow it to monitor, for example, performance, achievements, and health and safety. It is also necessary to process information, so that staff can be recruited and paid and legal obligations to government fulfilled. To comply with the law, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully.

To do this, Quest must comply with the Data Protection Principles which are set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 (the 1998 Act). In summary these state that personal data shall:

- be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met
- be obtained for a specified and lawful purpose and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose
- be adequate, relevant and not excessive for those purposes
- be accurate and kept up to date
- not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose
- be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction
- not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.

All Quest staff and consultants or others who process or use any personal information must ensure that they follow these principles at all times. In order to ensure that this happens, the company has adopted this Data Protection Policy.

Status of the Policy

This policy does not form part of the formal contract of employment, but it is a condition of employment and agreement of service that employees and consultants will abide by the rules and policies made by Quest. Any failures to follow the policy can therefore result in disciplinary proceedings. Any member of our team, who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about him/herself, should raise the matter with the HR manager initially. If the matter is not resolved it should be raised as a formal grievance.

Notification of Data Held and Processed

All employees and consultants are entitled to:

- know what information Quest holds and processes about them and why
- know how to gain access to it
- know how to keep it up to date
- know what Quest is doing to comply with its obligations under the 1998 Act.

Individuals can ask to see information that is held about them and the company will respond within 40 days. The information will be kept safe and it will be stored both on paper as part of staff's personal files and electronically on the company server.

Responsibilities of Staff and Consultants

All staff and consultants are responsible for:

- ✓ checking that any information that they provide to Quest in connection with their employment or agreement of service is accurate and up to date
- ✓ informing Quest of any changes to information, which they have provided, i.e. changes of address; telephone number; next of kin, etc.
- ✓ checking the information that Quest will send out from time to time, giving details of information kept and processed about employees and consultants
- ✓ informing Quest of any errors or changes. Quest cannot be held responsible for any errors unless the employees and consultants have informed Quest of them.

All staff and consultants are responsible for ensuring that:

- ✓ any personal data which they hold is kept securely
- ✓ personal information is not disclosed either orally or in writing or accidentally or otherwise to any unauthorised third party
- ✓ employees and consultants should note that unauthorised disclosure will usually be a disciplinary matter, and may be considered gross misconduct in some cases
- ✓ personal information should be:
 - kept in a locked filing cabinet; or
 - in a locked drawer; or
 - if it is computerised, be password protected; or
 - kept only on disk which is itself kept securely.

Processing Sensitive Information

Sometimes it is necessary to process information about a person's health, criminal convictions, race and gender and family details.

This may be to ensure Quest is a safe place for everyone, or to operate other company policies, such as the sick pay policy or equal opportunities policy. Because this information is considered sensitive, and it is recognised that the processing of it may cause particular concern or distress to individuals, employees and consultants will be asked to give express consent for Quest to do this.

Retention of Data

Quest will keep some forms of information for longer than others. In general information about employees and consultants will be kept for a minimum of six years after they leave Quest. This will

include: name and address; personal information forms; employment contract or agreement of services; copies of passport; copies of visas; copies of any reference written; copies of insurances; sign out forms; etc.

Other information however will be kept for much longer. This will include information necessary in respect of pensions, taxation, potential or current disputes or litigation regarding the employment, and information required for job references.

All other information, including any information about health, race or disciplinary matters will be destroyed within three years of the employees and consultants leaving Quest.

Review and Consultation

Compliance with the 1998 Act is the responsibility of all members of Quest. Any deliberate breach of the data protection policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken. Any questions or concerns about the interpretation or operation of this policy should be taken up with the Management.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice. Policy is accessible to all employees and consultants on the company web site and it is included in Quest corporate handbook. This policy should not be read in isolation, but cross-referenced with all relevant Quest employment policies.

Managing Director
Mar 2009