



Villamanta Disability
Rights Legal Service Inc.

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc.
Information Sheet Updated July 2015

Access to Information about You

The information sheet is about your rights. It explains what the law says about the information that other people have about you.

Everyone who uses services has a right to confidentiality and privacy.

This means that if someone has information about you because you use their service, they can't just give that information to someone else without asking you.

What sort of information do you mean?

When you contact someone to provide a service for you, they will ask you for information about yourself.

For example, if you want to book a haircut, the hairdresser will probably want to know your name, and your telephone number. They might also ask you for your address or your email address.



When you go to the doctor, they have much more information about you than a hairdresser. They probably have information about your medical history, test results, letters about you from other doctors and other things. All of this is information that is about you.

So when is my information protected by confidentiality?

Confidentiality rules cover information about you that someone only has because of their job.

Take this quick quiz to see if you can tell the difference:

Information	Protected by confidentiality?
Your name	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your address	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/>
What medications you take	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who your boyfriend or girlfriend is	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whether you have had a sexually transmitted disease	<input type="checkbox"/>

Important Note - This Information Sheet has been produced only for use in Victoria, Australia. Some of the laws mentioned in this Information Sheet will be different in other places.

How did you go?

- Your name Your name is public information that you use in a lot of places.
- Your address If your address is listed in the phone book, then it is publicly available. However if you have taken steps to keep this private, it may be confidential.
- Your date of birth If you posted on Facebook yesterday that it was your 21st birthday, this is no longer confidential information, because lots of people figure it out. If you have kept this private, it may be confidential.
- What medications you take This is very likely to be confidential. Probably the only people who know this are you, your doctor, and your pharmacist. The doctor and the pharmacist only know about it because of their job, so they must treat this information confidentially.
- Who your boyfriend or girlfriend is ? This depends on who you have told. If you have only told your support worker because you need assistance visiting them, then it is confidential information. If everyone knows about the relationship, then it is not.
- Whether you have had a sexually transmitted disease This is very likely to be confidential. There may be legal reasons why someone needs to be told – for example if there is a health risk to them – but otherwise this information is probably confidential. If your doctor knows about this they can't tell other people about it.

Are there some people that I can expect confidentiality from?

If someone has your information because it's their job, they probably have some requirement to treat your information confidentially.

Some people you might deal with have confidentiality requirements as part of their job:

- ✓ Doctors ✓ Social workers ✓ Disability support workers
- ✓ Lawyers ✓ Government employees ✓ Priests

What do the rules of confidentiality say?

The most important thing is that when someone has your confidential information, they can't tell anyone else about it, or give it to them. That is the main point of confidentiality.

Of course there are times when they need to pass that information on. Here are some examples:

When you ask them to, or need them to



If you ask your doctor to fill in a form for a Disability Support Pension, they have your permission to share your confidential information to do that

If the court tells them to



If there are court orders in place, they may require people to share information to make sure everyone has the right information about what is happening.

If it is in the public interest



This can include situations that are emergencies, or where you, or someone else is at risk of harm.

More questions?

If you want to speak to somebody about this, you can call our Telephone Advice Service on 1800 014 111