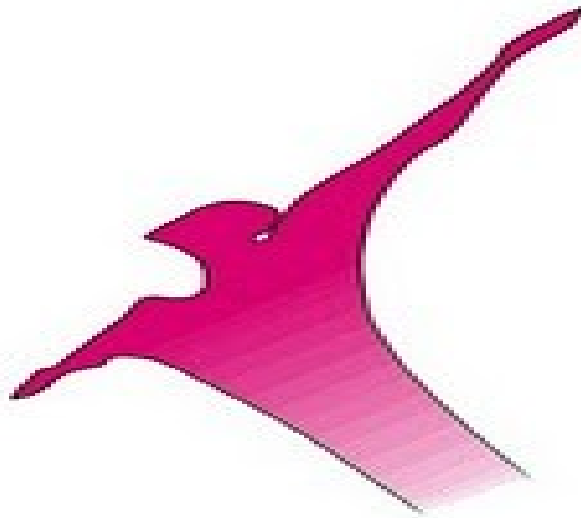


Chapter 1

Peer Support



Sharing Knowledge
Working Together
Improving Lives



www.haloabletec.co.uk
Tel: 07749 982114
iggy@haloabletec.co.uk

2016 version

The purpose of the Lincolnshire Independent Living Peer Support Project is to:

Train people with disabilities, and carers, to become effective peer supporters to others with disabilities so that they might lead self-directed and more autonomous, satisfying lives.

Help facilitate independent living within Lincolnshire and promote the social model of disabilities to all professionals, organisations and individuals.

What is a Peer Supporter?

A Peer Supporter is a person with a disability or a carer who has **learned life strategies, how to be a self-advocate**, and how to **live independently** and has **acquired the skills to help others** do the same.

As highlighted above there are four core skills to being a peer supporter.

1. **Learn life strategies** – as a person who is living with disabilities or someone who cares for someone who is elderly or disabled, you will already possess a great deal of knowledge which you have learnt through experience and just by living with various daily issues.
2. **How to be a self-advocate** - again, just through experience and having dealt with issues relating to benefits, direct payments or even just sorting out problems with your new TV with the department store, you may already possess the relevant information on the procedures needed to deal with problems and provide solutions.
3. **Live independently** – you may already do so or help someone do so, you may be aware of skills and techniques or organisations that may be able to help you assist yourself or someone else.
4. **Acquire the skills to help others** - this is the most important one of all; helping others to do the above three. Now's your chance to share those skills and knowledge to improve other people's lives.

Quote: *“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.” Dr Seuss*

Peer Supporter, Counsellor or Advocate?

A Peer Supporter differs from a counsellor or an advocate in that a Peer Supporter does not tell his/her peers how to live their life. Rather, a Peer Supporter offers the benefit of his/her own experiences, passing along the encouragement and support needed for others to construct their own advocacy and life strategies to bring about desired goals.

Advocacy has been defined as "...taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates...work in partnership with the people they support and take their side" (www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk). Within that general definition there are different forms of advocacy, including self-advocacy, where people speak up for themselves, often coming together in groups, and peer advocacy "where someone with similar experiences supports another person to make their views known and acted upon" (Disability Rights Commission, 2006).

Brokerage has been defined as "the assistance that people may need to work out what their choices will be, and the support required to make it happen" (Care Services Improvement Partnership, 2007). The activities that are included in this definition, such as information giving, informal support and advocacy, are very similar to the activities listed above, as part of peer support. However, support brokerage is more likely to be provided by paid workers and peer to peer relationships are not a defining characteristic of the role.

Why do we need Peer Supporters?

Peer support has been defined by the fact that people who have like experiences can better understand, relate and can offer more authentic empathy and validation. It is also a fact that people with similar lived experiences offer each other practical advice and suggestions for strategies that other professionals may not offer or even know about.

The availability of peer support is essential in the drive to transform adult social care to give service users choice and control in how their individual support needs are met. The recommendations at the end of this review seek to ensure that well-informed support is available to users of services when they make their choices.

Peer Support and Personalisation – National Centre for Independent Living Dec. 2008 (now Disability Rights UK) <http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>.

Listening, sharing firsthand knowledge about living with a disability, assist others in making informed, independent choices, share experience, information and strategies, ...

navigate attitudes and values that impede personal growth, offer solutions to barriers, obstacles and problems.” (<http://www.dacsc.org/core-services/peer-support>.)

Peer support is a key part of the campaigning and other activities used by disabled people, and other disadvantaged groups, to engage in their attempts to bring about change in the policies that affect their lives. It was through supporting each other that disabled people first developed the idea that they should be given cash payments to enable them to arrange their own support, instead of having to rely on home care or residential services (Campbell and Oliver, 1998). In recent years, peer support amongst long-term users of mental health services appears to have resulted in, not only the setting up of self-help groups such as Hearing Voices, but also in mainstream services questioning their own assumptions about treatments and recovery (Roberts and Wolfson, 2004).

Peer Support and Self Directed Support

The term ‘self directed support’ is being used increasingly to describe a variety of activities, all of which aim to enable individuals to have choice and control over how their support needs are met. The section linked in-control (see later) identifies some principles of self directed support which include self determination, accessibility, flexibility, accountability, and the right to an individual budget (www.in-control.org.uk). Individual budgets (or personal budgets) refer to the situation where an individual is informed of how much money is available to meet their support needs and is given control over how this money is spent. This may involve directing what services should be purchased on their behalf and/or taking a direct (i.e. cash) payment and making the arrangements themselves (for example by employing a personal assistant and/or purchasing equipment).

Peer Support and Direct Payments

The Department of Health guidance on direct payments states: ‘Experience has shown that developing support services is a key element of successful implementation of direct payment services’ (Department of Health, 2003, p.9).

A number of studies have looked at what needs to be put in place to make the take-up of direct payments for particular groups possible. For example, Values into Action researched into the low take-up of direct payments by people with learning disabilities and found that few support services were available and in particular there were very few services run by people with learning disabilities themselves. The authors concluded that it was essential to have peer support available to help people to access and manage direct payments in order to increase take-up and be successful (Bewley and McCulloch, 2004).

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4101751 committed the government to ensuring that by 2010, every locality would have a user-led organisation, modelled on existing Centres for Independent Living (Cabinet Office, 2005, p.76). A Government consultation on adult social care, carried out at about the same time as the *Life Chances* report, was told that:

‘When resourced adequately, local user-led organisations have been found to be the most effective means of delivering a range of services including advocacy, self-advocacy, peer support, and supported decision-making’ (Inter-Agency Group of statutory and voluntary organisations, 2005).

Now let’s look at the why being a peer supporter may be good for you?

Exercise 1

TIP: The majority of the manual has been written around using the Socratic Method of thinking (see chart below). It is hoped that by using this methodology it will allow practitioners of peer support to learn not only the skills to further help people, but also enhance their own learning experience.

Whenever you are stuck with a question go back to this chart and ask yourself the relevant questions. It will help clarify the reasoning behind what you are trying to achieve or lead you to ask the other questions which may help you find the answer.

The Socratic Method



Exercise 1

Using the Socratic Method ask yourself the following questions.

TIP: Try to answer as fully as possible as these answers will help and guide you in ensuring you are fulfilling your role as a peer supporter.

Who would make a good peer supporter (what are the strengths and skills required)?

When are the skills of most benefit to a client? (think of the situations that you could help a client with)

Where could you offer these skills? (think of your circumstances and what works best for you, bearing in mind any restrictions that you may have)

What skills/knowledge do you have that could help in your role as a peer supporter?
How would you know when you're ready to start?

Why do you want to be a peer supporter?

Skills - Listening/Communicating:

Are you in the Mood?

Are you ready to begin peer supporting? Before you start, ensure that your own needs are met and that you are comfortable to start peer support. Remember to check your own needs regularly. You can only give the best of yourself if you have looked after your own concerns beforehand.

Are you REALLY listening?

Many of us take for granted, when talking to people, that we are listening to them and likewise, when we communicate information, it is heard. Listening and communicating is a skill that is often confused. We may listen but have we heard them? When information is communicated have we just picked out the bits we want to hear? The person may have communication difficulties, for example they may be deaf or have other learning problems or disabilities. Think how you would communicate in these situations.

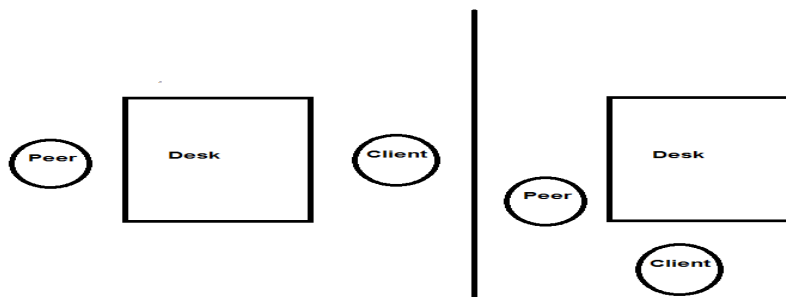
Is the room conducive to listening?

Our senses often distract us, by sight, smells or noises. Try to ensure that the room or place in which you are meeting is free from distractions and is light and airy. If the TV or radio is on, ask if it is ok to turn them off so that you won't be distracted. If it is dark, ask if there can be more light. If it is too hot, ask if you can open windows. Explain at all times why you are doing or asking for things. There may be reasons for the heat etc, of which you may not be aware. Also please be aware of those who have hearing or vision impairments. Your tone, lip movement and lighting can all have an effect on ensuring the message is gets across.

Are you sitting comfortably?

Ensure that you are both sitting comfortably. Try to ensure that there are no barriers between you and the other person, for example a desk or table, as this can lead to communication issues. If you need to use a table to write on, sit on the corner next to the person and not at one end.

Not conducive for effective dialogue
communication



Good for

Exercise 2

Arrange to have a conversation with a family member or friend. Let them tell you about their day. Do you find yourself wanting to interrupt them and ask questions? Do you find yourself wanting to tell them about your similar experiences? We all do it. Are we really listening? Try remembering this conversation. You will use it in this chapter in other exercises.

So what is Listening?

Listening is an active process. It usually has three steps.

- **Hearing** – means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying. For example, say you were listening to a friend talking about a shopping trip they have just had and they mentioned the name of a shop. If you can repeat the name of the shop, then you have heard what has been said.
- **Understanding** - after hearing, you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way. So your friend mentioned going shopping. If you understand what this means then you have understood, i.e. travelling to get something!
- **Judging** - after you are sure you understand what your friend has said, think about whether or not it makes sense. Do you believe what you have heard? You might think - she doesn't have a car, but she might have taken a bus, and she's carrying the bags from the shop she's mentioned.

How to be a good listener

- Give your full attention to the person who is speaking. Don't look out of the window or at what else is going on in the room. If distracted, ask them to repeat what they were saying. When meeting someone for the first time as a peer supporter, if possible, try to face them. Normally have the window to your back (unless the client is deaf, in which case reverse this). If the TV or radio is on, ask them if it's possible turn it off so you can concentrate on what they are trying to tell you.
- Make sure your mind is focused too. It can be easy to let your mind wander if you think you know what the person is going to say next but you might be wrong! If you feel your mind wandering, change the position of your body and try to concentrate on the speaker's words.
- Let the speaker finish before you begin to talk. Speakers appreciate having the chance to say everything they would like to say without being interrupted. When you interrupt, it looks as you aren't listening, even if you really are. Let yourself finish listening before you begin to speak! You can't really listen if you are busy thinking about what you want say next.

- Listen for main ideas. The main ideas are the most important points the speaker wants to get across. They may be mentioned at the start or end of a talk, and repeated a number of times. Pay special attention to statements that begin with phrases such as 'My point is...' or 'The thing to remember is...'
- Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, just ask. It is a good idea to repeat in your own words what the speaker said so that you can be sure your understanding is correct. For example, you might say, 'when you said that it wasn't the same product in the shop, did you mean it was a different brand or different product?'
- Give feedback. Sit up straight and look directly at the speaker. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh, or be silent. These are all ways to let the speaker know that you are really listening. Remember, you listen with your face as well as your ears!

Exercise 3

In your mind go back to the conversation you had in exercise 2. Check the tips above. Did you do all of these? If not, focus on the ones you feel you need to concentrate on for the future. Note down here what you could improve on.

Non Verbal Communication

It is not only your mouth that speaks and your ears that hear, your eyes can hear too! Daily, they take in numerous signs from a person's tone of voice, mood and movement which helps project the information they are trying to give you.

When listening, listen with all your senses, not just your ears. Watch the person you are listening to. How are they sat? When they are telling you things, are they laid back or leaning forward? Does their tone match their mood? Are their eyes fixed to yours or are they looking away?

It is important not to read signals from body language individually. You must look at the picture as a whole and measure it with what they are saying. Also ensure that you take racial attitudes and disabilities into consideration when watching someone. People may act differently due to their background or due to their disabilities. When supporting someone with disabilities, be particularly mindful of their mood and health. Some people with unseen disabilities may tire very easily.

TIP: Before making the appointment ask when the person feels at their best. First thing in the morning or late afternoons may not suit all. Do the supporting with short breaks. Ensure you and the customer both get adequate breaks, at least every hour.

Asking the right questions

In order to get the information we want it is important that we ask the right questions. There are two types of questions; open and closed.

Open Question – Can you tell me what you did today? Or how did you do that?

This type of question will ensure that the responder gives you a full answer. If they are struggling, you can help them along, by responding or reacting, 'Oh tell me more', 'Mmm' {Nodding}. Don't interrupt. Let them talk freely. If they are drifting off the conversation, bring them back with a gentle nudge. Go back to the bit that you want them to continue from, 'So let me get this straight. You were in the shop and they man said what? And then what happened?'

Closed questions – Are you a human?

A closed question will only give you usually a 'yes' or 'no' answer. They have their purpose, when wanting a straight answer, and should be used in such circumstances.

Generally, the peer supporter will want as much information as possible and will try to use open ended questions. These not only allow a person to tell you more but also make the person feel that they are being listened to.

Quote -"We should never pretend to know what we don't know, we should not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people, and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lowest levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders." — Mao Tse-tung

Note Taking

When meeting your client, it is always beneficial to take notes. This will allow you to refer back at other times and could help both parties when clarification is needed. It will also help you get to know the other person as it will lend some structure to the conversation and help you obtain the relevant information. Ensure the client is happy with this before you start.

When meeting your client it is important that any information is recorded and kept securely, ensuring confidentiality within the parameters of the Data Protection Act (see later).

TIP: Remember to use the Socratic Method as a check to ensure you have asked all the right questions.

Also each time you speak to a person, note the date and time.

Here is a standard form that you may wish to use for note taking;

Peer supporters case file

Case no ref:

Date:

Referral via:

Name of person/carer:

Disability:

Address:

Tel No

(Home & Mobile):

Email:

Preferred contact method E.g. BSL/Braille/Email

Notes /issues:

Action/ advice given:

Date file closed: / /

PAGE 2 (additional notes)

Date:

how the person can contact the peer supporter and the purposes for which contact could be made. This is primarily up to you. But please bear in mind your own personal needs and health.

Things to consider

Let the person know, that if you are told anything with regard to a matter which is of a nature which should be reported to the police, or that there is a risk to yourself/the client or others, you will have to report such matters to the appropriate authorities.

Your and their availability – for example, 9am - 5pm Monday – Friday (not lunch times).

Best method of contact – writing/e-mail/telephone/mobile (consider the person's technological or communication needs, for example they may not have or may not be able to use computers, mobile phones etc.

Access provisions for them and yourselves – do either of you need wheelchair access, appropriate high seating, disabled bathroom facilities? Parking provisions - consider if an alternate venue may be better for both or either of you.

Carer/family arrangements for both or either of you, including speaking to and in front of carers and family members.

Ensure you make a note, if and where necessary, that permission has been granted from the person to speak to others on their behalf. (Remember though, as a peer supporter, you are trying to help the person do it for themselves, not do it for them). But sometimes, due to disability or necessity, it may be necessary to just offer a little help or nudge, in which case it is better to have permission in writing.

The things you can and cannot help with - i.e. form filling, advice, information about peer support, benefits, disability aids, shopping. Be careful before giving any medical advice or legal advice. If you're not sure say so, but you can offer to find out for them and get back to them.

Copy of Code of Ethics for Clients

Peer Supporters are committed to facilitating personal, social and economic independence for people with disabilities. Peer Supporters recognise the importance of this Code of Ethics and commit to these standards being rigorously enforced.

The primary responsibility of Peer Supporters is to help people with disabilities advocate for their own needs, wants and goals. Peer Supporters will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all.

Peer Supporters will maintain high standards of personal conduct.

Peer Supporters will, at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.

Peer Supporters will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.

Peer Supporters will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.

Peer Supporters will advocate for the full integration of people with disabilities into the communities of their choice and will promote the inherent value of these individuals to those communities.

Peer Supporters will be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment.

Peer Supporters will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.

Peer Supporters will never engage in sexual or intimate activities with those they serve.

Peer Supporters will remain current in their knowledge of self-determination and the disability community.

Peer Supporters will not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.

Signature_____

Date_____

NOTE: The following four sections relating to Safeguarding, Mental Capacity, Diversity & Equality and Data Protection are given only as guides. They are not authoritative pieces of advice on legislation. Always seek further advice if in doubt.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Who is in Need of Safeguarding?

Any person aged eighteen or over who:

Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or Psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

'Significant harm' should be taken to include: 'ill treatment including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical; the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.'

The response for peer supporters in case of safeguarding issues will be :

- Recognise those individuals to which safeguarding issues apply.
- Take the matter seriously; note it, and report it immediately to the appropriate authority.
- Be timely, sensitive and maintain confidentiality as appropriate to each situation.
- Work with other agencies, including social services and police as appropriate.
- Be sensitive to every individual's identity, including culture, beliefs and ethnic background, gender, disability, age and sexuality.

Further guidance:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/lincolnshire/adultsc/chapters/p_adult_safeguarding.html

Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act covers major decisions about someone's property and financial affairs, health and welfare, and where they live.

It also covers everyday decisions about personal care (such as what the person eats), when the person can't make those decisions for themselves.

This means if you are unable to make some decisions, the Mental Capacity Act says:

- You should have as much help as possible to make your own decisions.
- People should assess if you can make a particular decision.
- Even if you cannot make a complicated decision for yourself, this does not mean that you cannot make more straightforward decisions.
- Even if someone has to make a decision on your behalf you must still be involved in this as much as possible.
- Anyone making a decision on your behalf must do so in your best interests.

The Mental Capacity Act sets out five principles –

1. Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and it must be assumed they can unless it is proved otherwise.
2. Also, a person must be given all reasonable help before anyone treats them as though they are unable to make their own decisions.

3. Just because someone makes what might be seen as a poor decision, it should not be assumed that they are unable to make any decisions.
4. Any decision made for a person who is unable to do so for themselves must be done in their best interests.
5. Any decisions made for someone else should not restrict their basic rights and freedoms.

How to tell if a person can make a decision

There are several things you should consider when assessing whether or not a person can make a decision.

- If the person understands what decision they need to make and why they need to make it.
- If the person understands what might happen if they do or do not make this decision.
- If the person can understand and weigh up the information relevant to this decision.
- If the person can communicate their decision (by talking, using sign language or any other means).
- If the person can communicate with help from a professional (such as a speech and language therapist).
- If there is a need for a more thorough assessment (perhaps by involving a doctor or other professional expert).
- If you must not treat the person as unable to make a decision just because they make a decision you don't agree with.

Further guidance:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/@disabled/documents/digitalasset/dg_186484.pdf

IF IN DOUBT SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.

Exercise 4

In your own words describe what safeguarding is about.

Exercise 4a

If a person makes a decision that you feel is wrong, what should you do?

Diversity and Equality

Everyone will agree that not everyone is the same. Our own needs and the needs of others may be different. It is therefore important to ensure that clients' diverse needs are respected and met.

Example: If I was to ask you if you wanted a drink and then placed a cup of white tea, with sugar before you - would I be considering your needs? How do I know if you wanted tea? Maybe you'd prefer water, or black tea without sugar?

What is Equality?

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and equally, and no less favourably, specific to their needs. This includes areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marital situation or through pregnancy and maternity.

What is Diversity?

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute, and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

Peer supporters commitment to Diversity and Equality:

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Advancing equality of opportunity across all different groups.

Fostering good relations between people of a diverse background.

Disability and Diversity

Remember that even within disabilities there is much diversity. Two people with the same illness or disability may react differently and have different needs. It is important that we listen and let people tell us what their needs are and not to assume that we know.

Quote: “Never judge someone **b**y the way he looks or a book by the way it's covered; **f**or inside those tattered pages, **t**here's a lot to be discovered”. [Stephen Cosgrove](#)

Data Protection Act

When does data protection law apply?

Data protection law applies whenever a data controller processes personal data. These words are given special meanings by the Act.

Data Controllers

A data controller is the person who determines the purposes for which, and the manner in which, any personal data is, or is likely to be, processed. In other words, you will be a data controller if the processing of personal data is undertaken for your benefit and you decide what personal data should be processed and why. A typical example of a data controller is an employer.

Personal Data

Personal data means data which relates to a living individual, who can be identified from that data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller. For example, most organisations will process personal data relating to employees, customers, suppliers and business contacts. These individuals are referred to in the Act as 'data subjects'.

Processing

The Act applies when personal data is processed or is to be processed by a computer, or is recorded or to be recorded in a structured manual filing system. There are other types of system covered by the Act, but these are the most

common.

Whether or not manual files are covered by the Act is not always an easy question to answer.

To be covered:

There must be a set of information relating to individuals, which is structured either by reference to individuals or by criteria relating to individuals, in such a way that specific information relating to particular individuals is readily accessible. If your manual files fall within this definition, you will have to comply with the Act.

The term 'processing' covers virtually any use which can be made of personal data, from collecting the data, storing it and using it, to destroying it.

The Data Protection principles;

In order to comply with the Act, a data controller must comply with the following eight principles:

1. The data should be processed fairly and lawfully and may not be processed unless the data controller can satisfy one of the conditions for processing set out in the Act.
2. Data should be obtained only for specified and lawful purposes.
3. Data should be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
4. Data should be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Data should not be kept longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed.
6. Data should be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject under the Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures should be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Data should not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Rights of Individuals

Data controllers must give the following rights to data subjects.

The right of access to his or her personal data.

The right to object to certain processing causing substantial damage or distress.

The right to object to automated decision taking.

The right to object to direct marketing.

- For more information on Data protection:
- <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>