



Students' Unions' Advice Service

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Statement

The Students' Unions' Advice Service is committed to providing all students of Cambridge University with individual support in all areas pertaining to their academic and welfare needs. We are a confidential service – we believe that all students have a right to confidentiality and believe that offering confidentiality gives students confidence in sharing personal information with us.

The Students' Unions' Advice Service understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a student who has approached the Service shall be given (directly or indirectly) to any third party outside the Service, without that student's prior, explicit and informed consent. Confidentiality also includes not confirming that any student has used or is using the Service without the student's consent.

The Advisors of the Service (the Advice Service Manager and two professional Advisors) will share information about individual students with each other, on a regular basis. This will usually occur in weekly reflective practice meetings. When having informal discussions, Advisors will ensure that they are speaking privately and that confidentiality is maintained.

Advisors will ensure that all meetings between themselves and students take place in a confidential meeting space and will ensure to the best of their ability that no inadvertent breaches of confidentiality take place.

Case Records

Advisors will keep an electronic record of the student's situation, advice offered and action taken. The student will also be asked to fill out a casework form. These details, along with the student's name, college, faculty and other relevant information, will be kept on our confidential student case management system and any accompanying paperwork will be locked away in our filing cabinet. Advisors will log off the student case management system when not in use and the login details will not be shared with anyone.

Records will be treated confidentially, and will only be accessible to the Advisors in the Students' Unions' Advice Service, and the student (if the student requests access to them -

complying with FOI and Data Protection Act 1998 legislation). Case records are kept for a minimum of seven years before being destroyed.

We will generate reports and statistics from all cases and enquiries the Students' Unions' Advice Service receives – these statistics will be used in written reports on the work of the Service, and inform CUSU and the GU's campaigns. Individual students and cases will not be able to be identified from these reports.

Procedure for Breaching Confidentiality

In very rare circumstances Advisors may feel the need to break confidentiality. There are only two situations in which confidentiality **will** be breached:

- i. Where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to the student's own or to others' safety;
- ii. Where the law requires disclosure for the prevention and detection of terrorism (Terrorism Act 2000)

The Students' Unions' Advice Service recognises that breaching confidentiality will only be done in extreme cases, and when the Advisor involved believes it is in the student user's best interest to do so. If confidentiality is to be breached at least one other Advisor should be informed and asked for their advice. Ultimately it is up to the Advisor involved to make the final decision as to whether confidentiality should be breached under the requirements made above.

The breach of confidentiality must be recorded with the following information provided:

- i. Name of the student and brief outline of the situation, specifying the reason that confidentiality is being breached;
- ii. Who has been asked for advice before making this decision;
- iii. What would be achieved by breaching confidentiality;
- iv. To whom confidentiality has been breached.