

KCLSU Advice Confidentiality Policy

Name: Confidentiality Policy	
Brief description: The policy outlines KCLSU's responsibilities and practice in relation to confidentiality.	
Approved by: Governance and Policy Committee	
Date of approval: 15.11.2016	Date of next approval: 15.11.2017

Introduction to the policy

We recognise confidentiality as key to the advice and support we provide. Any information you provide will be treated in confidence, with respect and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. This policy outlines KCLSU's responsibilities and practice in relation to confidentiality and data protection.

Definition of Confidentiality

KCLSU Advice operates within a framework of confidentiality. We understand confidentiality to mean that no information regarding you or your case will be given directly or indirectly to any other parties without your consent.

It is important to us that you can have confidence in accessing support from us knowing that no other person will know that you have used our service. Anybody who makes an enquiry about you or your case will be directed to this confidentiality policy and requests for information will be declined.

We want you to feel secure when accessing our support. You will always be seen in a private advice space.

Consent to Disclose Information

Any information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence within the Advice team, and will not be disclosed to anyone else without your permission, with the exceptions listed under breaches of confidentiality below.

With relation to this policy the Advice team is comprised of the Director of Communications and Campaigns, Advice Manager, Advice Caseworkers and Advice Project Coordinator. Only members of the team will have access to our case records. Discussions about cases will be



limited to members of the team, and will only take place in a confidential environment. If you object to information being shared within the Advice team, you must make it clear to the member of staff you are dealing with.

As part of our support for your case, it may be appropriate to discuss your case with relevant individuals within the College, such as your personal tutor, Head of School, or staff within support services. We will always seek your express permission before doing so, and no information will be shared if permission is not given.

Record-keeping

It is necessary for members of the Advice team to keep records of cases so that we can give effective support. Case files are stored on a secure, password protected case management system.

Case records are also kept to measure the quality of the advice given, and a sample of cases are checked throughout the year as part of a file review process.

You have the right to request to see your casefile. You need to do this in writing to the Advice Manager and access to a file will normally take no more than one week. Case records are kept for six years, after which they are automatically deleted.

Statistical Recording

We are committed to accurate statistical recording, so that we know about how our service is used and can identify trends or policy issues. Figures are monitored on a monthly basis, and published in an annual report. Any cases included in service publications will be fully anonymised.

The case management system is managed through AdviceUK and they will have access to headline statistics for monitoring purposes, however will not be able to view any individual student cases.

Exceptions to this Policy

Maintaining your confidentiality is of the utmost importance to KCLSU Advice, however there are exceptional circumstances in which we may be required to share your information without your permission.

These are:

- Where there is good reason to believe you may cause serious harm to yourself or to others, and you are unwilling or unable to take appropriate action yourself;
- Where there is an issue relating to safeguarding;
- Where we are required to do so by law
- Where the member of staff is required to appear in court as part of civil or criminal proceedings, then information may have to be disclosed that is relevant to the case.



If an adviser feels that information may need to be disclosed they will discuss this immediately with the Advice Manager, who will seek formal authorisation to make an exception to the confidentiality policy from the Director of Communications and Campaigns.

You will be informed that your information will be disclosed unless there is a legal obligation or requirement preventing us from informing you, or there is good reason to believe that your mental state is such that informing you could be detrimental.

Conflicts of Interest

Where conflict of interest is identified, advisers are responsible for taking appropriate action to manage this, which will always involve notifying you of the conflict (see Conflict of Interest Policy). In some cases, doing so may inadvertently draw attention to another student's use of the service.

Advisers will endeavour to limit this by only revealing that a conflict has been identified, but will not share any information about the other parties who have contacted the service.

Third Party and Safeguarding

We cannot give advice to anyone other than directly to the individual concerned, other than in exceptional circumstances where a student does not have the ability or capacity to speak to us directly. This is to ensure that we can maintain the quality and accuracy of the advice, and that the individual remains in control of their situation. This means we will not give advice to parents, guardians or partners of students. In such cases we will give information about the support we can offer to the individual, and direct the third party to the relevant regulations and guidance.

The exception to this is where a student is under 18, and the matter is a safeguarding issue where the student may be vulnerable to harm. In these cases we would refer to KCLSUs Safeguarding Policy to determine our actions.