



Policy Title:	Advice Centre Confidentiality Policy
Policy Owner:	Advice Centre
Date of Policy:	August 2018
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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out how our advice service adheres to confidentiality, explaining when this may be broken and how we use consent to assist with a student case.

2. Confidentiality Statement

We believe that confidentiality must be integrated across all aspects of welfare services and management and that students who use the Advice Centre deserve the right to confidentiality to protect their interests and safeguard the Students' Union's welfare services.

Except in exceptional circumstances (see disclosures & breaking confidentiality below) no information that might lead to the identification of a student using the Advice Centre shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party who is external to the Students' Union without the student's prior expressed consent to disclose such information. Confidentiality will be kept between the student and the Advice Centre team, not the individual Advisor.

Information will be routinely shared between Advisors, the Advice Centre Manager and the Head of Community Engagement in order to inform best practice.

3. Your personal information

The Advice Centre Privacy Notice sets out more detailed information about the information we collect on you, how we use it, how long we retain it and how we ensure it is kept securely.

Statistical Recording

Data recorded will be used to monitor take-up of services and to identify any policy issues. All statistical records given to third parties shall be produced in anonymous form, so that individuals cannot be recognised unless their express consent has been given.

Case Records

Written records will be stored only on our secure online case enquiry system provided by Membership Solutions Ltd.

Consent to give information

Advice Centre staff will usually gain expressed (written) consent in any case where any action is agreed to be taken by the Advice Centre on behalf of a student. Students can give consent by completing the Form of Authority (Appendix 1) and giving it (in person or via email) to the Advisor.

4. Disclosures & breaking confidentiality

The Advice Centre may share your relevant personal data with other bodies where we have a lawful basis to do so. This will usually be with the permission of the student granted through the Form of Authority. However, there may be some circumstances in which staff may feel they need to break confidentiality without the student's consent. In these circumstances, the decision will not be taken lightly and will be made bearing in mind the

interests of the student and legal obligations of staff. Any break of confidentiality will be taken seriously.

A break of confidentiality will only be considered when:

- i. The law requires disclosure
- ii. The welfare of a child or vulnerable adult is at risk
- iii. A student poses a serious and imminent risk to their own or others' safety

Staff have a legal duty to report information to the Police under The Drug Trafficking Act 1994 (suspicion or knowledge of drug money laundering), and The Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, The Terrorism Act 2006 and Counter Terrorism Act 2008 et al (suspicion or knowledge of involvement in an act of terrorism). It is a criminal offence for staff (including elected Sabbatical Officers) not to contact the Police in these circumstances and staff are not obliged to inform the student of their intention to contact the Police.

Staff are not obligated to disclose information shared about any other form of criminal activity and would not do so unless there were reasonable grounds to believe that a third party would come to harm if we did not do so.

Where we suspect involvement in fraud, we are not obliged to report this to any authority but will be forced to cease assisting in any related activity e.g. helping to fill in claims for state benefits including information which we know to be fraudulent.

In cases where the safety of the student or others is deemed to be at risk, or the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult may be compromised, reasonable steps, where possible, will be taken to gain the consent of the student to break confidentiality. However, we have a duty to protect vital interests (protect lives) and will therefore make decisions regarding disclosure without permission on a case by case basis.

Appendix 1

Form of Authority

Instructions for completion

1. Please copy and paste the statements below that applies to you.
2. Complete the blank spaces in the relevant statements.
3. Send via email to advice@su.rhul.ac.uk using your official RHUL email address.

I give consent for information about my case to be shared with [insert name/org]. []

I give permission to the Advice Centre staff to act on my behalf with [insert name/org]. []

I give permission to [insert name and relationship to you] to talk to Advice Centre staff on my behalf. Their contact details are [insert name, email address and phone number]. []

Your Full Name:

Your Student Number:

Date of completion: