

Confidentiality Policy

Greenwich Students' Union provides free, independent, and confidential advice to students.

We will not share any personal information with other organisations, including the University of Greenwich, without your consent, except in the circumstances listed below.

The Students' Union shall not disclose the fact that you have contacted us for advice unless you want us to.

We may only share information about you if:

1. We are obliged to share information subject to a Magistrates' Warrant
2. It is necessary to comply with our legal duties under Prevention of Terrorism legislation
3. We are concerned that there is a significant risk to your safety, or to the safety of other staff, students or other people unless we break confidentiality.
4. You are incapable of giving consent to share information (for example, due to intoxication or mental ill-health) and it is necessary to break confidentiality to protect your welfare.

The duty of confidentiality extends to all staff and volunteers working for the Students' Union.

Policy:

1. All personal information about students, including whether or not they are in contact with the Students' Union, is to be regarded as confidential unless the student concerned is willing for the Students' Union to disclose that information, or it is necessary for the student concerned to perform their role (for example, to share contact information if they are in a representative position). This is necessary to promote trust in the Students' Union, particularly for the advice service.
2. It is a management decision, not a personal decision, to break confidentiality in the circumstances listed in the Confidentiality Statement. No member of staff, including the Chief Executive and Full-time Officers shall decide to break confidentiality without consulting other appropriate staff. Unilateral action and other breaches of confidentiality without strong justification may lead to disciplinary action against staff, and lead to the termination of voluntary work with the Students' Union. Unnecessary breach of confidentiality may undermine clients' cases and risk the Students' Union and individual staff being sued by students.
3. Note that there may be situations in which it may not be appropriate to break confidentiality, even though staff may be concerned that the student concerned, or others, may be at risk. Staff will encourage students to consent to sharing their information rather than deprive students of their own autonomy as a starting point.
4. Confidentiality should not be broken if there is a reasonably practical alternative that can achieve the same benefit as breaking confidentiality. Confidentiality should only be broken to

the minimum extent necessary to comply with legal obligations or the welfare of students or third parties.

5. The Students' Union Advice Service will only share personal information about students with staff to the extent necessary to perform their role. All staff are reminded not to discuss personal information about students in public areas at the Students' Union or elsewhere. The Students' Union will not display information on clients of the Students' Union Advice Service where other students can see it.
6. It shall not be treated as a breach of confidentiality to discuss the possible need for breaking confidentiality with other staff or with independent legal advisers.

Procedure:

1. Staff considering breaking confidentiality on welfare grounds should usually first discuss their concerns with the student directly (unless there is a concern that the student will become aggressive, or it would put other individuals at risk).
2. If the student concerned refuses to consent, or staff are concerned that discussion with the student would put staff or others at risk, staff will discuss the possible need to break confidentiality with available staff. If other SU advice staff are not available, staff should seek guidance from the GK Unions advice staff. Further action may include seeking independent legal advice (which will be confidential to the Students' Union and the independent legal adviser).
3. Staff will seek agreement on how to proceed. If there is doubt about the value of breaking confidentiality, confidentiality shall be kept unless legally required to be broken.
4. **All** cases in which confidentiality has been broken without client consent will be reported in writing to the Chief Executive, who will in turn report to Trustees in confidence. The report will be referred to but kept separate to publicly available minutes.
5. A central record of cases in which confidentiality has been broken without client consent will be kept by the Advice Service.
6. There will be an annual review of this policy, the statement and of cases in which confidentiality has been broken in order to better plan for the future.
7. The Confidentiality Statement will be displayed in SU reception areas, and in advice interview rooms. The Statement will be listed on the SU website, and a summary of the information will be included in information for SU Advice Service clients.
8. This Procedure will be included as an Appendix to the Advice Service Manual.