



CUSU Student Support Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Statement

The Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) is committed to providing its members with individual support in all areas pertaining to their academic and welfare needs. CUSU Student Support, which provides this support, is a confidential service (nothing told to the caseworkers during sessions will be revealed to anyone outside the service without the individual's express permission), except in certain situations, listed below. CUSU believes that all users of CUSU Student Support have the right to this confidentiality in order to feel that they can trust the service.

The caseworkers of CUSU Student Support (currently the Welfare & Graduates Officer, the Education Officer and the Women's Officer) may anonymously, share information about a service user amongst themselves, if they believe this is in the user's best interest or if it is appropriate. This will remain confidential within the group.

This Confidentiality Policy also applies to other support services or schemes that CUSU Officers, full-time or part-time, set up.

Procedure for Breaching Confidentiality

In very rare circumstances CUSU Officers may feel the need to break confidentiality. These 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, for example, suicide;
- ii. Where the law requires disclosure for the prevention and detection of terrorism;

CUSU recognises that breaching confidentiality will only be done in extreme cases, and when those Officers involved believe it is in the student user's best interest to do so. If confidentiality is to be breached at least one other Caseworker should both be informed and asked for their advice. Ultimately it is up to the Officer 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.

Equal Opportunities

CUSU Student Support is open to any student registered at the University of Cambridge, including any person accepted as a student of Cambridge University who has not yet matriculated and to any person who disputes their status as a student of Cambridge University. The only exception is that the Women's Officer will solely represent those students who self-define as a woman.

Casework Records Policy

The Caseworkers keep detailed records of the work they do and the contact they have with students. These records will always be kept in a secure manner, either in a locked filing cabinet, or electronically protected. This includes any paperwork or supporting documents which go with the records. Any records kept by the Caseworkers will be subject to CUSU's Data Protection Policy. These are all in accordance with legal requirements of CUSU Student Support. These records may be shared with other caseworkers if the original caseworker believes it to be of benefit to the user, or wishes to receive advice on a case.

Once the case is resolved, records will be kept for up to 3 years and then destroyed. Before this time, the records can be returned to the user or destroyed upon their request.

CUSU Officers may keep statistical records of the work they are doing in order to monitor their support schemes. It is the responsibility of these Officers to ensure that statistical records are anonymous, so that users cannot be recognised, if they are given to a third party for reasons such as monitoring or to support funding applications.

Definitions and Explanations

Confidentiality

CUSU understands confidentiality to mean that no information given to one of the caseworkers of CUSU Student Support shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party that is external to caseworkers, without the user's express consent to do so. This consent can be verbal, but must be made completely clear. In most cases, written consent is preferred.

Confidentiality includes not confirming a user's presence at the service.

CUSU Student Support

CUSU Student Support is the service through which members of the CUSU Sabbatical Team give support and non-directional information to its members. The relevant CUSU Sabbatical Officers are the Welfare & Graduates Officer, the Education Officer and the Women's Officer. However, CUSU recognises that occasionally other members of the CUSU Executive will carry out similar activities and in such cases will be bound under this confidentiality policy.

Casework

Casework is the individual support that Executive members of the CUSU give in order to fulfil the aims of our constitution (to advance the education and welfare of its members.). The primary caseworkers are the Welfare & Graduates Officer, the Education Officer and the Women's Officer.

Contact

The CUSU Welfare & Graduates Officer, Education Officer and Women's Officer will be available via phone, email or personal contact Monday to Friday 10 am to 4pm at the CUSU Offices (Call 01223 333313 or drop in at the Old Examination Hall, Free School Lane, CB2 3RF). You can also contact us between 9 and 7pm (weekdays and weekends) on the Student Support Phone; 07880866146.

Conflicts of Interest

There may be a situation in which a caseworker may not feel able to act impartially due to a conflict of interests. In these cases, the student user will be advised to see another caseworker.