



University Counselling Service

Privacy Notice

This notice explains how the University Counselling Service collects and uses personal information.

Who we are

The University Counselling Service (UCS) is part of the University of Aberdeen Student Support Services. The organisation responsible for your personal information in terms of data protection legislation is the University of Aberdeen.

Information we collect

You will be asked to provide your name and university email address at the point of booking an appointment. You will then be asked to complete a 'Counselling Agreement' form, providing further personal details, including: your term-time address, GP details, ethnicity, gender, date of birth, student ID, name and level of degree, and mobile phone number.

We keep a record of your attendance at UCS, e-mails and potential telephone communications.

We keep a record of basic case notes to summarise what you have talked about in your appointment. This may include reasons for contacting UCS, presenting issue(s), relevant background and medical information, resources/support and any actions identified in the session. We will also record any risk concerns raised during your session.

We keep a record of students who we consider to be at risk and/or a particular cause for concern. This record is held securely within Student Support Services and access is restricted to a very limited number of management staff who need this information in order to provide support to these students. Students are removed from the record as soon as their circumstances change to the point where we no longer consider them to be a cause for concern. We keep this information in order to closely monitor

whether support being given to a student who is a cause for concern is appropriate to reduce the risk of academic or personal crisis.

Information we receive from external organisations

We may receive referral letters, psychological reports, requests for information and concerns about your mental wellbeing from external organisations, including the NHS, Police, Social Services, other statutory services, voluntary sector, and individuals within the community.

Why we collect this information

UCS collects and uses your personal information to provide and operate a counselling service. Our legal basis for processing your personal information is that counselling is a task carried out in the public interest by the University. We also process your personal information on the legal basis of your consent, particularly for the information you volunteer and with your permission to share information.

Disclosing your information

UCS does not routinely share your personal information with any third parties without your consent. However, where risk or cause for concern has been identified, we will share limited information with the Student Support Management Team with a view to ensuring appropriate support is provided by the university.

With your consent, we will share your personal information with other support services, such as your GP or other healthcare providers. At your request, we will also provide letters that evidence your attendance at counselling.

We may disclose information without your consent in exceptional circumstances, such as where immediate action is required for significant welfare concerns. In those cases, we will share personal information with emergency services and other support services. We will also share your personal information when required to do so by law.

Counsellors are bound by the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions from the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP) July 2018.

How long your information is kept

Your personal information is destroyed securely 7 years after your last contact with UCS, and in accordance with the University retention policy.

If you have any questions about how UCS handles your personal information, or your rights under privacy laws, you can contact us in the following ways:

Head of Service, University Counselling Service, University of Aberdeen

Email: counselling@abdn.ac.uk

Data Protection Officer, University of Aberdeen

Email: dpa@abdn.ac.uk

If you are dissatisfied with the way your personal information has been handled, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted via their website at www.ico.org.uk/concerns