

# Confidentiality and Data Protection Statement

## The Student Support Service

The Student Support Service is part of the Academic and Services Division at UEA and provides a range of resources and facilities primarily for students.

The Student Support Service works in close collaboration with the University Medical Centre and Sportspark; these have their own policies in respect of confidentiality and data protection.

This document outlines responsibilities and practices in respect of information relating to users of the services provided by the Student Support Service, and explains the Service's policies on confidentiality and data protection. The information contained in this leaflet is also available in alternative formats on request: please contact the Disability Coordinator Jane Abson ([j.abson@uea.ac.uk](mailto:j.abson@uea.ac.uk)).

## What records do we keep?

The Student Support Service records for administrative purposes basic information such as name, course, contact details and other biographical details, normally taken from the main University student database SITS/e:Vision.<sup>1</sup> This information may be held on paper and/or electronically in order to manage contact information, appointments, accommodation bookings, financial information and transactions, and to produce anonymised statistical information about users and use of Student Support Service services for monitoring and planning purposes.

During formal discussions with members of Student Support Service staff (including Senior Residents and Disability Mentors) you may provide information of a personal and sensitive nature concerning, for example, finances, disability, a medical or

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<sup>1</sup> The biographical details held by the University about you are based on the details provided by you in your application to the University. It is important that you keep your biographical details up-to-date. To amend your details, login to your e:Vision account through the UEA portal. If you live in UEA accommodation, your term-time address is kept up-to-date automatically by the UEA Accommodation Office.

mental health condition or personal difficulties. A record of the discussion may be kept on paper and/or electronically to ensure that the appropriate guidance or response is provided, particularly at any subsequent visit. Notes may record the key points or issues raised, the advice or information given by the member of staff, relevant background information, any action to be taken and details of any follow-up action. Other related correspondence, including, for example, information provided to the division by other University departments, such as Security or Schools, or external bodies, may also be filed on paper and/or electronically.

Paper records containing personal information are kept securely locked within the Student Support Centre; electronic files are stored securely on the University computer system.

## **How are these records used?**

All information given to Student Support Service staff will be treated confidentially with sensitivity, care and discretion.

### ***Disclosure to Third Parties***

Student Support Service staff will not normally pass on personal information about you to anyone outside the Service (a 'third party') including other academic or administrative staff at UEA, or other students, without your permission, subject to the following exceptions:

- when we are legally required to do so by the police, Home Office, or other law enforcement agencies;
- if you are under 18 years old and we have a serious concern about your well-being;
- when there are clear indications that you present a serious risk to yourself or others.

Whilst in these circumstances your consent would not normally be required, depending on the nature of the information to be disclosed, Service staff will normally attempt to notify you prior to the disclosure.

Subject to the exceptions detailed above, Student Support Service staff:

- will neither confirm nor deny to any person not a member of UEA staff that you are a student at UEA;
- will not have conversations about you with third parties outside the Student Support Service, nor disclose personal information about you;
- will not give out information related to you (such as appointment details, accommodation allocations, etc.) to third parties

without your prior explicit consent. For the avoidance of doubt: 'third parties' include parents, relatives and friends.

It may be necessary or appropriate for a member of Student Support Service staff to contact a third party on your behalf, for example, your adviser, in order to respond effectively to your enquiry or concern. In these cases the member of Service staff will explain the benefits of that contact and will seek your permission. If you do not give permission, other than in the exceptional circumstances outlined above, staff will not initiate discussion or correspondence with others in a way which allows you to be identified. If you do agree, the nature of the contact will normally be agreed with you in advance. In the case of telephone calls, the purpose of the call and information given will be agreed with you beforehand. In the case of written (letter or e-mail) correspondence, the content will be agreed with you before it is sent.

It may be that you request Service staff to deal with a third party whom you wish to act on your behalf, such as a parent. The University is an adult environment and will respond to students who are over the age of majority (18yrs of age) as adults. We will only deal with a third party about matters concerning you at our discretion. We will take into account whether the contact would be in your overall best interests, or if there are good medical, disability or mental health related reasons to do so.

**Under all circumstances, any information that is disclosed to third parties about you will be kept to the minimum necessary for effective response to the particular situation.**

### ***Students with specific learning difficulties, disabilities and mental health difficulties***

Students who have a specific learning difficulty (SpLD), mental health difficulty, disability or long-term health condition are legally entitled to have 'reasonable adjustments' (e.g. examination concessions, additional study support) made to facilitate their studies at University. The provision of 'reasonable adjustments' depends upon students providing evidence of their condition, SpLD, mental health difficulty or disability in order that the fairness and appropriateness of any reasonable adjustments can be demonstrated.

Basic information on the nature of the condition provided by the student on application is held on students' personal records by category (i.e. long-term medical condition, mobility impairment, sensory impairment, SpLD, mental health difficulty, more than one disability or long-term health condition, social communication difficulty). Students who advise of a pre-existing condition, SpLD, mental health difficulty or disability or are diagnosed during the course of their studies can amend their own personal record or this will be done on your behalf and with your consent by the Student Support Service staff. Additional individual information pertinent to the provision of reasonable adjustments is shared with University staff providing academic and other services only with students' written agreement.

Students who do not give written agreement for pertinent information to be shared may find that the scope and nature of any reasonable adjustments the University could make on their behalf will be restricted.

For further information please contact [disability@uea.ac.uk](mailto:disability@uea.ac.uk) or [mentalhealth@uea.ac.uk](mailto:mentalhealth@uea.ac.uk).

## **Information and Confidentiality Security**

If you speak to any member of the Student Support Service in order to discuss personal information about yourself and you are not known to, or cannot be identified by, the member of staff, you will be required to show your University ID, or in the case of phone enquiries, asked a security question, to positively establish your identity.

If communicating with Servicen staff by email, confidential information will normally only be sent to your UEA email account, so please ensure you check this regularly.

## **How long are the records kept?**

The period for which records are retained before destruction is informed by current data protection legislation and good practice within the higher education sector. All paper files of current students are kept for the duration of the students' studies plus two years. Files containing disability information are kept for the duration of the students' studies plus six years. Files containing information relating to financial interactions are kept for the duration of the students' studies plus seven years. Files containing information relating to visa and immigration advice are kept for the duration of the students' studies plus ten years. Electronic records of Student Support Service use may be kept longer to allow general usage to be tracked over time; no reports of service use will identify individuals.

## **Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice**

Student Support Service Counsellors adhere to the Ethical Guidelines of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP); copies are available from the Counselling Service or from the BACP web site ([www.bacp.co.uk/](http://www.bacp.co.uk/)). All Student Support Service staff adhere to the Student Support Service Code of Professional Practice, copies of which are available from the Service web site

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/student-support-service/Policies/Code+of+Professional+Practice>

## How can I access my records?

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you have the right to access information held about you. If the records include references to other individuals, those references may have to be removed from the records as those individuals also have protection under the Act. If records include letters or information from a third party (for example, a letter from your GP) consent from that person must be obtained before the information is disclosed.

Students may request a copy of the personal data held about them. If you wish to access your Student Support Service records, please write to the director of Student Services in the first instance or to the Head of Wellbeing in relation to Counselling records. Your request may be referred to the University's Information Compliance Manager, Dave Palmer ([david.palmer@uea.ac.uk](mailto:david.palmer@uea.ac.uk)), in the Information Services Directorate and an administration fee may be payable.

## Further information and complaints

Further information about the way in which the University manages student data can be found on the University website:

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/is/strategies/infregs/dp/student\\_dpa](http://www.uea.ac.uk/is/strategies/infregs/dp/student_dpa).

If you have any concerns about Student Support Service data protection or confidentiality, please raise them with any member of Service staff. If your concerns are unanswered or you have a complaint about the way in which information you have disclosed has been used, please write to the Director of Student Services.

*Last updated July 2016*