



Cardiff Students' Union
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Case Management Policy and Procedure

Person responsible for this Policy:	Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing
Who the Policy applies to:	Student Advice Employees
Date issued:	January 2023
Date to be reviewed:	December 2023

Unless expressly stated otherwise, this policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and the contents are not contractually binding on the Students' Union or its employees. However, failure by any employee to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken and, in the most serious cases, may result in dismissal. The Union reserves the right to amend the policy from time to time.

For the purposes of this policy the terms 'Union' and 'Students' Union' includes Cardiff University Students' Union, Cardiff Union Services Limited and any subsidiary of the Company or of its holding company. These terms shall have the meaning given them by the Companies Act 2006.

Introduction

Ensuring that a robust Case Management System is in place is essential to guarantee the client's matter is dealt with professionally, in a timely manner, and with a positive outcome wherever possible. At Student Advice, case files are stored consistently using AdvicePro software to ensure that:

- Case records/files are accessible, orderly and easy to locate from initial registration to case closure;
- Case records/files are stored confidentiality and in password protected secure devices;
- Progress of the client's case and outcome can be easily identified and monitored;
- All supporting documents relating to the client's case are filed appropriately;
- Open and closed cases can be distinguished (numbers for both provided) and can be easily located;
- Cases can be selected by Line Managers/Supervisors to undertake independent file review and case progress checks.



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This procedure is made available to all Student Advice staff and volunteers during induction. The procedure will be referred to during staff training, team meetings and in supervision sessions.

Case Allocation and Enquiry Management

1. Enquiries

Queries received that do not require advice will be dealt with by the Student Advice and Wellbeing Assistants and logged as an enquiry in AdvicePro.

2. Cases

Any query that is identified as requiring advice will be categorised as a case on AdvicePro and will usually be allocated in the first instance to an Advice and Advocacy Coordinator. Allocation at this stage is usually on a rota basis, alternating between Coordinators, unless case load or absence requires anything different. Student Advice Assistants will be informed of any changes to the allocation of cases.

If the case appears to be particularly complicated, or looks likely to become so, the Advice and Wellbeing Assistant should ask the Student Adviser where it should be allocated. If the case is beyond the current competence of the Advice and Advocacy Coordinator, it can be allocated as follows:

- To the Coordinator, to be guided through by the Adviser. This may be appropriate where the case is not too far beyond the Coordinator's capability and can be used to further develop knowledge; or
- Directly to the Adviser. This will be appropriate where the case is far beyond the current competence of the Coordinator and/or resource at the time means that direct referral is preferable.
- In some circumstances, a case may be allocated directly to the Deputy Head of Student Advice, where the case is outside the competence of both Coordinator or Adviser, has particular complexity, sensitivity, or where a conflict of interest arises.

A case can and should be escalated to an Adviser at any point if that becomes necessary due to complexity/competence. Escalation can be requested by a Coordinator or an Adviser, for escalation to Adviser or to the Deputy Head of Student Advice.

Management of Case Files

All engagements with Student Advice must be recorded for the benefit of future data analysis and to maintain accurate records of the advice the department delivers, and the contact made with a student.

Engagements in the Student Advice service delivery should be recorded on AdvicePro.



Service users engaging with Student Advice via wellbeing initiatives or campaigns should be recorded securely on the server.

Opening Cases

When an engagement is categorised as a case and is to be allocated to a Coordinator or Adviser, the Advice Assistant must create a case within AdvicePro and assign the case to the relevant 'owner' (case handler).

The case details at this stage should include:

- Full client name
- Student ID number,
- Telephone number
- Preferred email address
- Academic School
- College
- Campus

NB: If a case is identified as a housing category, the Wellbeing Assistant should also record the service user's term time address. This is to allow AdvicePro to flag relevant Conflicts of Interest.

If a client has refused consent for their data to be shared with an AQS Assessor, 'CONSENT REFUSED' must be added after their name.

Once the relevant case has been created, the Assistant should add all details of the initial contact. This should be placed in 'Work Completed' as a 'Work Item'. The 'Work Type' should be specified in the entry for the purposes of impact reporting. Any attachments, webchat transcript(s) or telephone notes should be attached to the work item for the case handler to access.

The Assistant should then email the case handler with the details of the allocation. Where a case is identified as requiring a more urgent response, the Assistant should also inform the Coordinator/Adviser verbally, and/or via Microsoft Teams to let them know.

Management of Open Cases

Once allocated to a case handler, the Coordinator/Adviser must ensure that a record of all contact, including details of any discussions and advice given, is stored in the case on AdvicePro, inclusive of any attachments.

The progress on case files and information records should be clear (including handwritten case notes) to any other Coordinator/Adviser. Case notes and work completed on AdvicePro must include a clear written record of the advice the client has received, agreed actions and who is



responsible.

Where a conversation/advice takes place verbally, e.g., by telephone, Zoom, or in person, the Coordinator/Adviser must also include:

- Full details of the conversation/advice in the form of notes; and/or
- A copy of their confirmation of advice email, which must cover everything that was discussed.

Case Closure

In most cases, the staff member responsible for the case must close the case on AdvicePro after seven working days of no further contact from the client. The case can be reopened, should the client return to the service and require further advice.

Other reasons a case may be deemed as complete are:

- The advice available under the Service Charter has been provided;
- The client no longer needs advice from Student Advice;
- The Student Advice Service has been suspended under the Tone of Voice Policy and Procedure.

Exceptions to the Case Closure procedure outlined above are:

- Where a student is awaiting the next stage of a formal investigative process and has expressed an interest in sustaining support from Student Advice.
- Where a case handler has concerns for the individual and intends to send an email within a fortnight before deciding on the most appropriate next steps.

Storage of Case Files

All case files will be stored on the AdvicePro case management system for a minimum of 6 years, in line with GDPR.

Confidentiality and Access to Client Files

Student Advice has arrangements in place to ensure the client confidentiality and privacy can be maintained during advice sessions:

1. Enquiry Desk Services

- The Student Advice Enquiry Desk is a private space, separate from other services within Cardiff University Students' Union. Whilst the Enquiry Desk exists in the open-plan office, the computer screen is not visible to any other department, member of staff or visitor to the building. Only the Wellbeing Assistants or Student



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Advice Career staff can use or access the main Advice Enquiry Desk computer.

- Clients can ask at any time to speak to a member of staff in a private environment.
- Clients may be asked, or may request, to sit in the waiting area while their case handler becomes available. The waiting area is secluded from the rest of the office.
- When attending an appointment, the client will be asked their name and whom they are scheduled to meet – as such, they will not be required to disclose any information relating to their circumstances at the Enquiry Desk.
- When answering a call reception staff will take basic information only. Name, student number and reason for the call will be taken before the call is transferred to a member of staff. No advice will be given in the waiting area that is detailed and specific to the client. Generic advice may be given.
- Advice room doors will always be kept shut during discussions with a client. A radio is played in the waiting area to ensure conversations within advice rooms cannot be overheard.

2. **Face to Face Sessions**

- All face-to-face advice sessions must take place in private rooms.
- Staff must ensure that, in between appointments, all notes, papers and computer screens are cleared of previous client information. Computers must be locked when leaving the desk.
- Staff will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that consultation rooms are confidential, being mindful of visibility and sound. Staff will ensure that case discussions, telephone calls, and other sensitive discussions cannot be overheard either in the interview room or the waiting area.

3. **Remote meetings with clients**

- Remote meetings take place via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype, or via telephone.
- All remote meetings must take place in a private space. This might be in the workplace or in a private room at home, should the member of staff be home working.
- Remote meetings are always arranged with the client in advance so they will be expecting the call and can arrange a private space for themselves if necessary.
- The client will be asked at the beginning of the call if they have concerns about their privacy and if so, an alternative arrangement will be made.

4. **Home Working**

- In line with the Students' Union's Flexible Working Policy, home workers must ensure client confidentiality and privacy by using a private workspace where conversations cannot be overheard. Where this is not possible, the member of staff must work in the Student Advice Centre or other suitably private space within Cardiff University Students' Union.
- Home workers must ensure that no client records are accessible when working from home, to anyone other than the member of staff. Computers must be locked, and password protected at all times, and any identifying notes should be destroyed. Any paper records that need to be kept must be locked away, and not accessible to other members of the household.



5. Phone Calls

The following applies to telephone contact with clients:

- Advice via phone will take place in a location that is private unless the advice is very generic;
- Voicemail messages will only be left to state that the call is from XX in Cardiff Students' Union, and will not disclose the nature of the call;
- The client will be asked at the beginning of the call if they have concerns about their privacy and if so an alternative arrangement will be made.
- Phone calls are not currently recorded but if this is put in place at a later date client will be advised of call recording;
- The Student Advice number is routinely withheld.
- Notes of all telephone conversations will either be scanned, typed into a Word document, or added to a confirmation of advice email. This document will then be electronically stored in the case on AdvicePro and any paper notes destroyed. If electronic storage is not possible immediately, any paper notes must be stored securely until it is.

6. Outreach and attending hearings

Staff provide advice in various locations throughout the Cardiff University Campus:

- **Heath Park Campus**
 - Cardiff University Students' Union has a Hub at the Heath Park Campus. Private rooms are available at this site for advice sessions. Secure IT equipment and a telephone is also available.
- **Meeting a student prior to a hearing or meeting with University staff on the University campus**
 - It is common for staff to meet clients outside the office and prior to a hearing or meeting when some last-minute advice and preparation might take place. In these situations, client confidentiality and privacy are maintained by:
 - The provision of a separate and private space for the purpose of preparation
 - Where a private space is not available, the member of staff will ensure conversations are quiet and away from others and take place with client consent.
 - Client papers will be returned to the office after a meeting should be scanned and destroyed or locked away. Client papers that are taken home should be kept safe and locked away until they can safely be returned to the office.

GDPR and Consent to Store

Student Advice will store client information in accordance with the Cardiff University Students'



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Union Privacy Notice and Data Protection Statement and the [Student Advice Confidentiality Policy](#). We will keep the information for 6 years following the last client contact with us, unless the client asks us to destroy the records earlier, or we are obliged to keep the file for longer to meet specific legislation.

All Student Advice clients are informed of their right to access the personal information we hold, and of their right to object to the processing of their personal information, to rectify, to erase, to restrict and to transmit their personal information. Any requests or objections are asked to be made in writing to the Data Protection Officer using the contact details provided in the Cardiff University Students' Union [Privacy Notice and Data Protection Statement](#).

Clients are informed of their rights as follows:

- The Cardiff University Students' Union Privacy Notice and Data Protection Statement and Confidentiality Policy, both of which are available on the Students' Union website.
- All clients who email the Student Advice service receive an automatic response informing them of their rights under GDPR. This email also informs the client how to refuse consent for Student Advice to store their information, should they wish to do so.
- For all telephone calls we ask all clients if they consent to Student Advice storing their information under the GDPR, and for their information to be used if required by an AQS file audit. The telephone call script used to do so is detailed below.

Consent to Share

Student Advice are committed to providing a confidential service. The information we hold on a client will only be passed to another agency, or to other individuals outside of Student Advice, in the following circumstances:

- With express consent; and/or
- If Student Advice deem it necessary to breach confidentiality (please note, circumstances in which confidentiality would be breached are very limited and are detailed in our Confidentiality Policy; and/or
- If requested by an Advice Quality Standard assessors to complete a file audit during assessment, where there is consent to do so from the client.

Gaining Consent

- Emails: Student Advice use an 'opt out' approach to gain consent if a client contact us by email. Every client who emails the Student Advice service will receive an automatic response, which says that we may share their information;



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“If requested by Advice Quality Standard assessors to complete a file audit during assessment. AQS is the quality standard for providers of general advice services and further information is available here. If you do not consent to Student Advice sharing your information with AQS, please contact us to update your record.”

- Live chat: We are expressly ask for consent to share with AQS before the client clicks to submit their chat. A consent tick-box must be checked before the client clicks on ‘send chat’ in our live chat function.
- For all telephone calls: We ask clients if they consent to Student Advice sharing their data with AQS. The telephone call script used to do so is detailed in Appendix A.
- Web-forms: Where a client requests further information through the web-forms on the Student Advice webpages, they will receive an email informing them of their rights under GDPR. This email also informs the client how to refuse consent for Student Advice to store their information and/or to share it with AQS assessors, should they wish to do so.

Recording Consent

Student Advice records client consent to share information with AQS for all clients, and will be documented on the case if consent is refused. Refused consent must be noted in the client’s case on AdvicePro. The case file title will be updated as AQS CONSENT REFUSED for any client who has refused or withdrawn consent.

Review

The Case Management Procedure will be reviewed yearly by the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing ((this work may be delegated to an Adviser) and after staff/volunteer discussion/input. During the course of day-to-day work if the Case Management Procedure requires amendment this will be discussed during staff team meetings. Any substantial change between annual reviews will be presented to the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing for approval.



Appendix A - Script for Telephone Calls

“Good morning/afternoon, welcome to Student Advice etc.

I have three very quick points I need to make you aware of before I take your details, is that okay?

First, I need to let you know that Student Advice will store your information in accordance with the Students’ Union Privacy Notice and Data Protection Statement and the Student Advice Confidentiality Policy, both of which are available on our website.

The second point is that you have a right to access your personal information at any time and to ask that it is edited or erased.

The third is that we would like to share your information with Advice Quality Standard assessors, if requested, to complete a file audit during assessment. AQS is the quality standard for providers of general advice services and the checks would be for quality purposes only. Is this okay?”



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