

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

At first contact

- Your name, Student ID, University email address and your UK-based mobile phone number. This allows us to contact you with, and allows us to keep track of, appointment details.

At your counselling appointments

- Your personal details: your student status, campus location, school, academic level, year of course, nationality, gender, year of birth.
- Information to facilitate the therapeutic work, which may include, reasons you contacted UCS, presenting issue, relevant personal and family background, past/present coping, relevant medical history, GP details, social support, solution opportunities and therapeutic aim. This information may or may not be recorded, but will allow the Counsellor to frame the counselling appointment and consider action plans and/or referral options.
- Your signed consent for UCS to handle your personal information. Your signature may be used as verification for any future request for information from UCS.
- Basic case notes to summarise what you have talked about in your appointment. This will summarise key facts to help the counsellors to remember what you discussed and to record any risk concerns. This does not provide evidence of fact, rather it represents a brief summary of what you talk about and discuss with the counsellor.
- Your attendance records and e-mails or potential telephone communications.

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.

With your consent, we will share your personal information with other support services, such as the University Student Advice & Support Office, the Mental Health Adviser, 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.

Your rights

You have rights to obtain a copy of your personal information, and to ask us to correct inaccurate or incomplete personal information.

Under certain conditions, you also have rights to ask us to restrict the way we use your personal information, to object to the way we use your personal information, to erase your personal information or to provide you with a portable electronic copy of personal information.

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
Telephone: 01224 272139
Email: counselling@abdn.ac.uk

Data Protection Officer
University of Aberdeen
Telephone: 01224 272596
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/