

## Disability and Wellbeing Service

This policy relates to the Disability and Wellbeing Service and any information we receive about your disability. Where personal information is sent to other academic departments and services; it should be noted that they may have their own policy and they will ask for your consent to use information about you.

For the purposes of this policy, information about your disability includes information about the nature and existence of your disability, medical or mental health conditions or temporary illnesses, which may have an impact on your studies at the School.

At LSE we actively encourage individuals to let us know about any reasonable adjustments we may make in order to support disabled students as effectively as possible. There are a number of stages at which you may be given the opportunity to disclose the existence and/or nature of a disability, such as:

- When contacting the School for information before applying
- When arranging to make an information visit
- UCAS or other application forms
- During enrolment at your academic department
- Application for accommodation
- Correspondence with your funding body
- The Exams Office
- International Students Visa Advice Team
- At a first meeting with an Academic Adviser or Supervisor
- When arranging work placements or field trips
- When using the Careers Service

Following your reading of this document, you will be asked to sign the Disclosure Form. This gives your agreement to our contacting and sharing information with relevant parties, while we pull together the information required to draw up an Inclusion Plan (IP).

To the extent permitted by and in accordance with the law, any information that you disclose relating to your disability will be treated as confidential and processed strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the School's Data Protection Policy.

It is important to remember that, without your consent, information about your disability will not be passed on. It is your responsibility to decide what LSE knows about your disability, but without full information it may be difficult, or impossible, to implement support. There may be additional requirements specific to your individual needs which we will need to know in order to be of most help to you. LSE staff will make arrangements for support to be put in place for disabled students, but only when they get the information necessary to do so. If consent is provided, the information will be shared with staff to ensure you are fully supported.

## Keeping records

The Disability and Wellbeing Service can provide support and advice to disabled students by liaising with your funding body to help with your application, to organise support strategies and to assist with a needs assessment. Listed below are details regarding information that may be needed and examples of how this information may be used in order to support you effectively:

### 1. **Medical evidence, a Diagnostic Assessment Report for a Specific Learning Difficulty, such as dyslexia, or other proof of disability may be copied and sent**

- To your funding body (home students only) to assist in your application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).
- To support an application for individual examination arrangements.
- When eligibility has been established for the DSA, an additional copy may be sent to the Assessment Centre where you will have a needs assessment.
- To arrange appropriate packages of support for International students who are not eligible for DSA.
- We will encourage students to take their information, if necessary, to the LSE Accommodation Office, their GP, if appropriate, and Student Counselling Service and Student Services Centre. At times, however, it may be easier for us to copy and send the appropriate documentation through to these departments.

### 2. **Course details and academic records**

- If relevant, the Assessment Centre designated to make your needs assessment will need these to provide an accurate assessment of your study and technological needs.

### 3. **Previous or current needs assessment report**

- This information is held by the Disability and Wellbeing Service to provide advice and support on study aids and strategies. We may forward relevant sections of this to appropriate personnel in your Department to ensure support is provided if so required.
- A copy is also sent to your funding body to ensure funding is provided.
- Relevant sections may also be sent to other academic services in line with recommendations made in the report.

### 4. **Correspondence with disability-related funding body may be forwarded**

- To the Assessment Centre to show agreement to funding.
- To your Department to inform of any financial arrangements that are specified by the funding body, i.e. the use of paid support staff such as a Communication Support Worker.

### 5. **Application for Individual Examination Arrangements**

- May be discussed with the Individual Exam Adjustments Panel.

### 6. **Personal details (including contact details)**

- It is our policy to empower students to contact relevant internal and external services themselves. Information relating to a student will not be disclosed to parents/guardians/relatives without the express permission of the student. If parents, guardians or relatives contact us to discuss an individual's disability and support needs, we will not contact directly that individual to offer support; students are encouraged to contact us themselves, **in complete confidence**.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

There may be circumstances where the Service will have to disclose information to persons outside the Service without your specific consent. For example, these may include:

- **circumstances where staff reasonably believe that there is a serious risk of harm to you or others**
- **circumstances where staff are obliged by law to supply information to certain authorities or persons, e.g. the Police.**

Any such disclosure will be limited and strictly for the purposes set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Please ask us about this if you are anxious or uncertain.

## **The LSE Inclusion Plan (IP)**

Once we have all the relevant information, you will have a meeting with a Disability Adviser who will create an LSE Inclusion Plan (IP) listing your individual support arrangements. You can decide how much detail you wish to have on this regarding the existence and nature of your disability. For example, you may wish to disclose only that you have a disability and how it impacts your ability to engage with your course, rather than the nature of the disability itself.

You will then be asked to sign the IP and it will be sent to staff to implement. Because of the fluidity of School staff, it may be that some are not aware. In this case, you should take responsibility for sharing the contents of the IP with them, to ensure you can access your course. If you do not feel comfortable with this, please contact the Disability and Wellbeing Service as soon as possible and they will disclose on your behalf.

## **Storing and accessing information**

If you wish to access information held by the Disability and Wellbeing Service, please refer to the procedure for submitting subject access requests under the Data Protection Act.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/dataProtection/Home.aspx>

In line with legal requirements, information will be kept for a period of seven years. After this time all notes are destroyed or shredded.

If you have any questions about this policy or you wish to discuss these issues further please contact us on [disability-dyslexia@lse.ac.uk](mailto:disability-dyslexia@lse.ac.uk) or **020 7977 7767**

# Student Counselling Service

## 1. Introduction

The Student Counselling Service recognises the importance of confidentiality for students using the service.

It is widely recognised within UK law that counsellors owe a duty of confidence to the client because of the special nature of the relationship, and that maintaining the trust and privacy of personal information is a legitimate expectation for the client. This policy sets out the arrangements for storage and access to information held about clients. It is informed by the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy ([www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)) and complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 2. Confidentiality Principles

- a) **Confidentiality is maintained within the Team.** Information about the names and contact details of users of the service is kept confidential. The counselling service is part of the Counselling and Wellbeing Team, made up of professionals including counsellors, mental health advisors and other staff within the Disability and Wellbeing Service, together with administrative support for these practitioners. We use a team approach in order to provide the best quality services to our clients, and where necessary, staff from the counselling service may need to liaise with other practitioners within the Team in order to work out the best available treatment options. These discussions are specific and limited. All information that is supplied to the teams and/or received by the teams relating to students is regarded as confidential and is kept securely. All staff working in the administrative office are required to sign a contract to maintain the confidentiality of every person using the service.
- b) **Exceptional circumstances and Duty of Care.** As a part of the School, the Student Counselling Service has a Duty of Care to students, which includes areas such as standard of care, breach of contract and negligence. There may be exceptional circumstances in which there is a significant concern of a risk of serious harm to a client or another person. In such an event it may be necessary for information to be shared outside of the Counselling and Wellbeing Team with other health care professionals (eg a Doctor) and/ or a small number of staff within the School; this would be restricted to those with responsibility for the pastoral care and welfare of all members of the University. This would be a most unusual event, but falls within the BACP Ethical Framework and AUCC guidelines (Association of University and College Counselling). Wherever possible, the service would seek the client's agreement to any change in the confidentiality arrangements.
- c) **Disability Legislation.** Under the Equality Act (2010) the School is deemed to know of a student's disability if the student makes this known to any member of the School. At the same time, the School recognises that a student has a right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act and the Equality Act (2010). The counselling service will pass on relevant information to the Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS), and this can enable the DWS on behalf of the School to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of a student. Apart from in the exceptional circumstances outlined above, no information about a student will be passed on to any other member of the School without the explicit consent of the student.

## 3. Audit and Evaluation Data

An Excel programme is used to record general information about the usage of the service. This statistical information allows the service to maintain an overall picture of service activity, such as the number of appointments made and kept each month, the ratio of Undergraduate and

Postgraduate users, and very broad categories listing the reason for seeking counselling. There is no link in this data with any material relating to the content of counselling sessions.

The service also collects evaluation data from students, using electronic evaluation forms. No evaluation information supplied by any individual student can be linked up to their personal notes, and neither will it be disseminated in any form that could possibly identify the student. Data from both the audit and evaluation programmes may be circulated across the School and in other public documents, such as annual reports.

#### **4. Counselling Notes**

The counselling service keeps brief notes on the content of each counselling session. These notes are confidential to the service, and are used to record themes and details from each session. They are a subjective record of counselling sessions, and are used to log significant information and assist counsellors in their thinking about their work with each client. These notes are kept in a paper folder in a locked filing cabinet, which is only accessible to the counselling service.

#### **5. Provision of Written Information**

Occasionally a student may request a counsellor to provide written information to other members of the University. For example, sometimes it is helpful to liaise with members of staff, such as an academic adviser or Student Services Centre. Such letters or emails will only be written with the student's consent, and can be shared with the student, according to their wish.

#### **6. Supervision**

Each counsellor is professionally required to have regular supervision, in which they reflect upon their work with their clients with an experienced and appropriately qualified supervisor. This work is governed by the same principles of confidentiality. For further information see [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk).

#### **7. Access to Records**

Clients have the right to see information stored about them. The only exception is if disclosure of information would be likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health or condition of the client.

If a student wishes to have a copy of information stored about them, it is recommended that they should discuss this with the counsellor they have been seeing. Alternatively, requests should be put in writing to the Head of Student Wellbeing Service. The Service will reply to such requests within 40 days, and may make a charge of up to £10 for disclosure of information stored on clients.

The counselling service will not provide access to client records if requested by other parties, unless this is with the explicit written consent of the client, or unless directed by a court order. Any other request for copies of the counsellor's notes will be refused.

In no circumstances will the original copies of notes be provided to the client or any other party, even with the consent of the client. Counsellor's notes will be stored for a period of 6 years, and then will be destroyed within a secure and confidential process.

#### **8. Publicity**

This Policy is freely available to any Student, member of staff or the public. It will also be made available as a link through the website for the LSE Student Counselling Service.