

Peer Support Pilot Confidentiality Policy

The UCL Students' Union Peer Support project is a pilot, that provides a confidential space for students to be supported by other students who are trained Peer Link Workers (PLWs). The project is managed under the Advice Service which operates independently from UCL and any other external organisation.

Without the express authorisation of a student, PLWs will not disclose anything about their conversations to anyone outside of the Peer Support Project Team (including the University), other than in exceptional circumstances which are set out in this policy.

This means that:

- We will not tell anyone that a student has received support from our PLWs, or anything about that enquiry.
- We will not ask students to give any personal or sensitive information in front of other students.
- We will not make referrals to any other services without speaking to the student first.

The role of PLWs is to provide a space for students to talk about what is on their mind. PLWs do not give advice but may signpost students to other services that may be helpful.

Operation of this policy

PLWs agree as part of their contract to maintain confidentiality in their roles. The initial training of Peer Link Workers includes making sure there is a good understanding of this confidentiality policy and how it works in practice.

PLWs may share information with the Peer Support Project Team as part of their supervision and have access to a shared email inbox. This is to make sure PLWs are supported in their role, can seek advice when appropriate and to maintain quality of support. PLWs will generally not personally identify students during their supervision, unless discussing immediate concerns for a student.

In relation to this policy, 'Peer Support Project Team' refers to the Students' Union UCL Advice and Advocacy Manager, Peer Support Coordinator from the UCL Division of Psychology and Language Sciences, Clinical Psychologist providing consultative support to the project and the Peer Link Workers (who are UCL students).

Anonymised, aggregated information about service use statistics may be shared with the Students' Union and the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences for the purpose of reporting on the uptake of support. Only the Advice & Advocacy Manager and UCL Peer Support Coordinator have access to the shared inbox.

Exceptions to this policy

Maintaining confidentiality of students is of the utmost importance to the Peer Support project. Usually, information will only be disclosed to a third party with the express permission of a student. However, it may be necessary to break confidentiality in exceptional circumstances.

These include:

- Where there is good reason to believe a person may cause serious harm to themselves, another person or group of people; and that person is unwilling or unable to take appropriate action themselves.

- Where there is a safeguarding issue relating to a child (including students who are under 18) or an adult at risk (due to age, disability or illness). The Peer Support project will follow the [UCL Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure \(Staff and Students\)](#) – please see this policy for information about when

The decision to break confidentiality is taken very seriously, and will always be discussed with a senior member of staff (usually the Advice and Advocacy Manager) before any action is taken.

Wherever possible, students will be informed when confidentiality is to be broken. The Peer Support Project Team will try to discuss with the student their preferences for receiving further support, and to take these wishes into account.

In situations where confidentiality is to be broken without consent (for example, where urgent medical attention, including psychological support is required) the relevant service(s) will be contacted, UCL security may be notified (if the student is known to be in UCL space) and UCL's Director of Student Support may be informed.