

## Confidentiality

All staff should treat any personal disclosures sensitively and respectfully so a relationship based on trust can be developed as this will encourage students to seek any help required. When dealing with any personal and sensitive information staff should remember it needs to be treated as confidential data and so must make sure they adhere to Bangor University's Data Protection Policy and related policies, which comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. In practical terms this means being mindful of the following:

- No information about a student can be given to anyone outside the University without that student's permission. This includes parents and close family members.
- Staff handling sensitive information must take all possible steps to ensure it is stored securely.
- Staff advising students will seek consent to disclose sensitive and personal information to relevant people. In so doing they will inform the student of:
  - the disadvantages of not allowing personal information to be shared
  - the advantages of agreeing to the sharing of personal information
  - what is recorded, how it is stored and who has access to and use of the information.
- Where a student's consent to share information is gained, it will only be shared with colleagues on a need to know basis. The information, whether written or verbal, will be kept to the minimum information needed and be factual and non-judgemental. For example, requesting support needed does not necessarily mean disclosing the reasons for the support.
- In the following instances staff may disclose confidential information to relevant staff without the student's express consent. If the student:
  - is putting their life at risk.
  - is putting someone else's life at risk.
  - is a minor and is suffering or is likely to suffer harm.
  - is adversely affecting the rights of others.
  - is adversely affecting the wellbeing of others.
  - is not able to maintain daily living routines and relationships.
  - is compromising the professional integrity of staff.
  - is disclosing information which affects the staff's well being.
- If unsure whether to disclose without the student's permission always seek advice from the relevant head of service or senior manager.
- Similarly, in the extreme circumstance that disclosure of confidential information to an outside agency is deemed necessary, for example if dealing with a critical incident or criminal offence, the matter should be referred to Gwenan Hine, Head of Compliance, to implement.

- Staff will advise students demanding 100% confidentiality that in the circumstances listed above disclosure will be made to appropriate persons regardless of the student's wishes.
- When personal and sensitive information is no longer required it should be disposed of securely.

NB:

- a) Further guidance on data use is available from the Policy and Legal Compliance Team. Please contact Lynne Hughes on 2776 / [l.hughes@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:l.hughes@bangor.ac.uk) or visit their website <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/planning/dataprotection/index.php.en> to see the Data Protection Policy and related policies.
- b) In addition to the above, the Student Counselling Service is an Organisational Member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and as such works within its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. Please check their website for details: [https://www.bangor.ac.uk/studentservices/counselling/documents/Confidentiality\\_statement.pdf](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/studentservices/counselling/documents/Confidentiality_statement.pdf)