



## **Aston Student Advice (The Advice and Representation Centre)**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

This policy sets out what is meant by confidentiality, how information is managed in a confidential manner, and the circumstances under which confidentiality may be breached.

- Aston Student Advice (the Advice and Representation Centre) provides a confidential service.

The service given by Aston Student Advice through the Advice and Representation Centre is confidential. This means that no person or organisation external to Aston Student Advice or the line of management, including Aston University, will be made aware that a client has made use of the service or any details of what was discussed or exchanged in writing, without the express written or verbal consent from the client.

The Aston Student Advice staff team and line of management consists of the Advice Reception staff, the Welfare Advisers, the Advice and Support Manager and the Membership Services Manager. In exceptional circumstances the Chief Executive of Aston Students' Union might be consulted on a matter related to Aston Student Advice.

All of the Aston Student Advice team and line management are required to agree to and sign a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 1).

- The confidentiality of clients may be breached in specific defined circumstances. Breaching confidentiality means the disclosing of information shared with Aston Student Advice without the consent of the client.

The circumstances when confidentiality may be breached are:

- a. Where there is a belief that there is a serious risk of harm to the client or to others and it is believed that this risk of harm could be mitigated by breaching confidentiality.
- b. Where there is a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, which requires the service to inform a person that the service cannot advise them or act on their behalf. The making of this statement may have the inadvertent impact of making the person aware that another person is a client of Aston Student Advice.
- c. Where there is a legal obligation, such as through an order of the court, compelling the service to reveal information.

In each of the above cases the Advice Reception staff and/or the Welfare Advisers should use best endeavours to consult with the Advice and Support Manager or the Membership Services Manager before breaching confidentiality.

- Client details and information will be managed in a way that supports the commitment of Aston Student Advice to confidentiality.

Client case records are stored securely using the MSL Case Manager digital case management system. Under an agreement between Aston Students' Union and MSL, MSL staff may only access case records with legitimate reasons/excuse such as handling a fault in the system or at the request of Aston Student Advice.

Case records will be stored up to maximum of 7 years at which stage the records will be deleted from the Case Manager system.

Clients have a right to request access to their case records and proof of identity will be checked before any records or information is provided.

External audits of client case records may be carried out. The organisation and individuals carrying out this external audit will be required to abide by this Confidentiality Policy. The external auditors will never be Aston University or staff employed by Aston University.

**If you have any general enquiries about this policy please contact [advice@aston.ac.uk](mailto:advice@aston.ac.uk) or call 0121 204 4848.**