Canterbury Nightline

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

# CONFIDENTIALITY

Canterbury Nightline aims for every caller to feel like they can talk about anything. Because of this, confidentiality is one of the service’s five core principles. Nightline endeavours to keep all data from both volunteers and callers safe and secure. We ensure that any data that we hold about you is anonymised and only accessible by those who need to do so.

This policy applies to all volunteers at Canterbury Nightline. Volunteers will maintain confidentiality both whilst volunteering for Canterbury Nightline but also after they cease to volunteer.

## Aims of the Policy

This policy should cover:

* What information is collected
* How this information is stored
* Who has access to this information
* When this information is shared and with whom

In future, the committee may amend this policy, should such amendments be required to better meet these aims.

## Responsibilities

The **Coordinators** are responsible for:

* Ensuring this policy and procedure are being effectively implemented;
* Reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation, as part of a cycle of policy review.

The **Training Officers** are responsible for:

* Carrying out and maintaining training of all Nightline volunteers, especially providing volunteers tools to implement this policy

**Volunteers** are responsible for playing an active role in implementing this policy and developing their skills.

## Definitions and Notes

In this policy, “calls” and “callers” may refer to all uses of Canterbury Nightline’s student support and information service whether in spoken or written communication.

## PROCEDURE

Any information revealed on a call, IM or email remains confidential within Canterbury Nightline unless one of the exceptions below applies.

All notes made during calls will be destroyed at the end of a shift after all of the calls, IMs and emails have been inputted into the Call Log Google Form. Call Report holds only basic, non-identifying information including: date, time and length of calls, the gender of callers and the nature of the call.

When someone calls or emails us are able to see their email or phone number. However, we do not record or take note of this except in the exceptional circumstances outlined below. Our number will show on itemised bills.

# Internal Confidentiality

All calls and information that callers give Nightline is considered to be confidential within the Nightline. This means that Volunteers can discuss calls (but not identifiable information) with any other Nightline listening volunteer, senior volunteer or coordinator.

## LISTENING-IN

We have a facility in place to listen-in to calls via a second handset. This facility is only used by other trained Nightline volunteers. Furthermore, volunteers can ask the other on-shift volunteer to read through, and comment on Instant Messages at any time. Both of these things are only done in three circumstances:

* By a senior listening volunteer; so that they can give advice and feedback after the call - this is an important part of Nightline’s quality control
* By a newly-trained listening volunteer; so that they can listen to real calls - this is important to building a volunteer’s confidence and as part of their induction
* By another listening volunteer; in order to help or support the volunteer taking the call

A caller can ask if anyone is listening-in at any time, and the volunteer will confirm if so. If the caller does not want their call listened-in to, the second volunteer will cease to listen to the call and the caller will be made aware that they are no longer listening-in.

In addition to this, volunteers are encouraged to reply to emails in pairs to ensure that the quality of replies is maintained. When this happens, both volunteers will be trained listening volunteers.

# EXternal confidentiality

There are certain situations where confidentiality has to be breached including: terrorism, serious harm to children and vulnerable adults, money laundering and treason. When these scenarios arise Nightline will have to pass things on to external organisations. Each of the exceptions have specific actions to be taken.

## Terrorism

Under the Terrorism Act 2000, information received by any citizen regarding an act of terrorism must be shared with the police. Under section 19 of the Act, if a citizen fails to pass on information about planned or actual terrorism, this is a criminal offence.

As soon as a volunteer is alerted to a possible act of terrorism, the volunteer should request the following information from the caller and record their responses as accurately as possible:

* The exact wording of the threat
* Where the bomb is right now
* When it is going to explode
* What the bomb looks like
* What will cause the bomb to explode
* The caller’s name
* The caller’s phone number

The volunteer should record the time of the call and inform the other volunteer to phone the police. If the caller is still on the line, the volunteer should attempt to keep them on the line as long as possible.

While the volunteer can tell the caller that they have contacted the police, they should not inform them of what information has been passed on in case this prejudices any investigation. Assist the police as far as possible.

Always inform the Coordinator if action has been taken under this section.

## Serious crimes

In addition to this there are a number of serious crimes that Nightline are required to report to the police these are:

* Serious harm to children or vulnerable adults (see Safeguarding Policy for more details)
* Money laundering
* Treason

## When a volunteer is ordered by a court to give evidence regarding a caller

Canterbury Nightline understands that if an individual volunteer refuses to break confidentiality by revealing relevant evidence from a caller when ordered to do so by a court, this volunteer may be held in contempt of court. Consequently, Canterbury Nightline encourages all volunteers to comply with requests from a court of law for evidence obtained during a call, IM or email they have taken.

In this situation, the notes from the call, IM or email would have been destroyed so the volunteer will have to rely on any information in the call report and their own memory.

## Persistent Abusive Callers

It is in the legitimate interests of Nightline to protect against abuses of the service to protect our volunteer safety, wellbeing, and ensure that the service remains available for genuine callers.

Where a caller acts in a persistently abusive or threatening manner towards our volunteers, Nightline may disclose personal data of that caller to appropriate third parties. Such parties include the police, other Nightlines, Nightline Association, and other organisations with responsibility for our volunteers’ welfare such as our affiliated Universities and Students’ Unions. This disclosure may include personal data such as name and phone number.

## Caller who requests third party contact

If a caller asks for the volunteer to contact the emergency services, the volunteer may ask for the appropriate details from the caller and then disclose this information to the emergency services.

# Stakeholder Confidentiality

This project is backed by four external stakeholders who provide support in various forms. They are:

* University of Kent – Provide expertise and funding. The University’s Student Support and Wellbeing team provide counselling and debrief services for volunteers. The Telephone lines and computer network are also maintained by Kent University.
* Canterbury Christ Church University - Provide expertise and funding. The student support services provide counselling and debrief services for volunteers.
* Kent Union – Provide help and support with recruitment and training. Also have overall legal responsibility for this project
* Christ Church Students’ Union

Due to this all stakeholders are given a copy of all policies, procedures, and other relevant documents. All stakeholders also get regular written reports on the progress of the Nightline. These reports include details of types of calls but no identifiable information. In addition to this:

* Kent Union have access to a list of volunteers that volunteer for the service as they help with the training
* University of Kent has access to the computer internet history and the call logs of the phone. Individuals with access to this information will not access it without cause and are required to sign non-disclosure agreements.

## Kent Union Student Activities Coordinator (Community)

The Kent Union Student Activities Coordinator (Community) has responsibility for the day to day oversight of Nightline. Due to this they have access to all information regarding the service. This includes detailed non-identifiable information about calls which have been passed on to the emergency services. They will never listen to calls or be given any identifiable information.

The Student Activities Coordinator treats all Nightline information as confidential unless they have to pass something on due to safeguarding issues.

## Samaritans

Although Samaritans are not a stakeholder, Canterbury Nightline has been lucky enough to have their support in the project and they sit on the stakeholder board as a partner having full input in decisions. As part of this support they assist with writing and delivering training, giving advice on policies, and providing regular debrief sessions to volunteers. Any information they are privy to will be treated in confidence as laid out in the Samaritans confidentiality policy.

# Campus security

Campus security at both universities are fully aware of Canterbury Nightline and we are lucky to have their support. The appropriate campus security will be alerted by phone to the following situations

* When an ambulance has been called to a student on campus
* When there is reason to believe that someone is at risk of harm on campus
* When a caller has disclosed information regarding terrorism in connection with a campus

# VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY

Information is collected from prospective volunteers when they attend interviews and in their application form. Only personal information relevant to operating the service is collected at this meeting such as name, year of graduation, university attending and best contact email.

The information of unsuccessful volunteer applicants is destroyed within a week of the training weekend.

Personal information of volunteers is kept online on 3Rings. We do not collect any additional data from volunteers; any extra information on 3Rings is willingly provided by the volunteer and is not requested by us. All information on 3Rings is kept for up to a year after they leave the service. All other records of volunteers are kept in a Google Drive to which only the Coordinators have access to which is then deleted once the volunteer leaves the service. At this point, any copies of physical information are shredded, and electronic data deleted from any software used by the service. Three Rings data is manually deleted, and hard copy information is shredded.

We are able to provide references for volunteers. If a volunteer who is volunteering for the service requests a reference this is written by their designated senior or one of the coordinators and then destroyed straight away. When a volunteer leaves the service, they can opt for the coordinator to write them a reference. With their written consent this reference can be stored and used for up to 3 years after leaving the service.