# RGU: Nightline Confidentiality Policy

Nightline Policy:

“RGU: Nightline is a confidential listening service and will only break confidentiality in exceptional circumstances.”

Purpose and Scope

RGU: Nightline is committed to ensuring that confidentiality is one of the core principles of our services and is upheld at all times. We understand that people call Nightline believing that their conversation with us will not leave the service and that they can share their feelings with us and trust that we will not pass this on elsewhere. Our confidentiality policy applies to all volunteers within the Nightline service, even after the volunteers have left the service. There are different levels of confidentiality within the Nightline service which can be extended to other parties such as the Nightline Association and also university support services such as the counselling service.

There are four exceptional situations where a caller’s confidentiality may be breached.

* Terrorism
* Suicide (when given permission to contact emergency services)
* Child Protection
* Serious Harm to another person

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, we use and define the term ‘confidentiality’ in the following ways:

**Call monitoring and technology**

RGU: Nightline recognises that with the use of technological advances there might be ways in which a caller’s identity or location might become available, for example, contacting the service through a social media platform. RGU: Nightline takes all precautions in this regard to ensure confidentiality and anonymity is not breached unnecessarily.

Phone lines

We receive no itemised bill for the phone lines.

Instant Messages

All IMs that come through via the chat service are anonymised and the caller can choose their own ID for their protection.

E-mail

All e-mails that come through via our e-mail address are anonymised through a function which scrambles the caller’s address and provides a random ID which cannot be traced back to the identity of the caller.

**Listening-in on calls**

At RGU: Nightline there are always two listeners present. Listening-in on calls refers to another volunteer who is not the speaking volunteer, listening to both sides of the call. Listening-in does not refer to another volunteer overhearing the speaking volunteer’s side of the call in the same room. Calls may be listened in on for routine training and quality monitoring purposes and in these situations the caller is told beforehand that there will be two volunteers listening to both sides of the call. Similarly, with IM and e-mail, both sides of the conversation may be seen, and therefore listened into, by another volunteer in the office.

**Record-keeping of calls**

All logs of calls are kept within the Nightline service on Call-report and in securely stored log books. Call logs capture the following aspects of the call: time, length, gender of caller (if explicitly known), the broad topic of call i.e. exam stress, relationships, information call, self-harm. Logs are kept for the purpose of review to identify any pattern or trend in call topics or caller demographic to enable RGU: Nightline service to adapt their training, publicity, and information accordingly.

**Sharing of RGU: Nightline call records**

RGU: Nightline currently have three stakeholders: a) the Students’ Union, b) Robert Gordon University, and c) the Nightline Association with whom we share an annual statistics report to show the impact our service. Details of calls are not shared with stakeholders and remain within RGU: Nightline.

RGU: Nightline is fully cooperative with the law. Any information available should and will be shared with the authorities if asked by court order.