

Priority Cases Policy

1. Overview

- 1.1. This policy will detail the service's position on the handling of cases requiring urgent attention. This policy will identify what is meant by a priority (or "urgent") case and the steps to be taken by the service.
- 1.2. Most cases will not be considered urgent and may be acted upon within the normal timeframes and standards.
- 1.3. The service operates Monday to Friday during normal office hours. Responses to urgent requests will be during normal working hours except where specific arrangements can be made.

2. Definition of a priority case

- 2.1. A priority (or "urgent") case will be defined by the following factors:
 - i) How the student presents or appears to the service or other SU staff.
 - ii) The seriousness of the matter at hand.
 - iii) The proximity of deadlines, meetings or panels.
- 2.2. A case will normally be considered urgent where;
 - i) A student presents to our service, a member of SU staff or an SU Officer in a very distressed state. Examples of "distress" include appearing unusually anxious, tearful, or otherwise agitated.
 - ii) The matter the student is seeking advice relates to the student having been bullied, harassed, assaulted or sexually assaulted.
 - iii) A student is homeless or is facing homelessness and/or eviction.
 - iv) The student has an imminent Fitness to Study, Disciplinary meeting or panel, or Fitness to Practice panel. "Imminent" will be defined as the panel or meeting taking place within the next five working days.

3. Handling priority cases

- 3.1. In most instances, Advisors will be able to use the above guidance to accurately identify priority cases.

- 3.2. For the avoidance of doubt, the Students' Union Support Manager will have final say on whether a case will be considered urgent under this policy.
- 3.3. The Advisor and the Students' Union Support Manager will determine (based on 2.2 above) whether a student needs an immediate appointment or whether an appointment may be provided urgently.
- 3.4. A student will be consulted before scheduling urgent appointments. Students may request for their appointment not to take place within an urgent timescale.
- 3.5. Where possible, a student with an urgent case will be provided with an appointment within 24 hours if they make an explicit request for one, subject to section 1.3 above.

4. Signposting, referral, and safeguarding

- 4.1. Advisors will consider policies and practice related to signposting and referral, and assist students in accessing appropriate support services if required.
- 4.2. Advisors will refer to the Safeguarding Disclosure Procedures (February 2022) and determine whether the matter should be referred to the Lead Safeguarding Officer or Deputy.
- 4.3. Where an Advisor believes, they may need to breach confidentiality they will discuss with the Lead Safeguarding Officer and/or Deputy (Student Support Manager).