



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Counselling
Service.

Policy on Arranging and Cancelling Appointments Information for Students

During much of the academic year there is a waiting list for counselling and late cancellations or missed appointments can increase the wait for counselling.

If we have sufficient notice, we can offer cancelled appointments to students on the waiting list. You can help to reduce wasted appointments by:

1. Letting us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel an appointment; (A cancellation with less than two working days notice is counted as one of your sessions.)
2. Letting us know straight away when you decide to withdraw from counselling or a place on a group/workshop.

We also ask you to act responsibly by:

3. Being punctual for your appointments;
4. Letting us know as soon as possible if you are running late for an appointment; (The time lost is counted as your session time.)
5. Letting us know any changes to your contact details;
6. Being as flexible as possible in your availability for counselling;
7. If you are on the waiting list for counselling, keeping us informed on your availability.

Please contact us on 0114 222 4134 or email ucs@sheffield.ac.uk as soon as possible if you are unable to keep an appointment.

Arranging Appointments

The Counselling Service will aim to be as clear, efficient and responsible as possible when arranging appointments and will:

1. Endeavour to offer you an appointment at a convenient time;
2. Ask you to confirm an offered appointment by a stated time – unless the appointment is made in person or directly over the telephone; (If we have not received confirmation by the deadline, we will assume the appointment is not wanted and offer it to someone else.) If the appointment is not convenient, we will try to offer a more suitable one as soon as possible.
3. Be clear about the number of sessions we can offer you at the Initial Assessment or at the first on-going appointment; (A missed appointment with insufficient notice is counted as one of these sessions.)

4. Endeavour to give you as much notice as possible in the event of having to cancel an appointment we have booked for you, and to offer an alternative where possible;
5. Use discretion in applying the policy where it would clearly be unreasonable to do so;
6. Inform you about the arrangements for cancelling appointments, the policy for managing appointments which are missed or cancelled at very short notice and the reasons for this.

Arrangement for Missed/Cancelled Appointments

Cancellation is when you give the Service **more than two working days notice** to cancel an appointment.

DNA is when you **do not attend** an appointment, or give **less than two working days notice** to cancel.

On-going appointments (OG) that are DNA'd are counted as one of the offered sessions which are contracted with you at the start of counselling.

For Initial Assessment (IA)

- If you cancel your IA (regardless how much notice is given) for the first time, you will be offered another IA.
- If you DNA (as defined above) an IA for the first time, you will be sent a letter /email /text inviting you to contact us to book another assessment appointment.
- If you DNA (as defined above) an IA for the second (or subsequent) time, you will usually be asked to attend a drop-in session before a decision to offer a further appointment is made. This will enable discussion of any difficulties, questions or concerns about attending an assessment session.

For first counselling session when you have waited for counselling

- When you have waiting for counselling, if you cancel your first counselling session (regardless how much notice is given) for the first time, you will be offered another appointment if one is available, otherwise you remain on the waiting list.
- If you DNA (as defined above) your first counselling session, at the counsellor's discretion, you might be:
 - a. Put back on the waiting list and sent an email/letter to ask if you wish to be on the waiting list for counselling with a deadline to reply. If no reply is received by the deadline, it will be assumed that you no longer wants counselling; or
 - b. Offered another appointment with a deadline to confirm. If no reply is received by the deadline, it will be assumed that you no longer wants counselling; or
 - c. Removed from the waiting list for counselling.

For all other counselling session

- If you cancel your counselling session (regardless how much notice is given) for the first time, you will be offered another appointment if one is available.
- If you DNA (as defined above) your counselling session, at the counsellor's discretion, you might be:
 - a. Sent an email/letter to ask if you wish to commence/continue counselling with a deadline to reply. If no reply is received by the deadline, it will be assumed that you no longer wants counselling; or
 - b. Offered another appointment with a deadline to confirm. If no reply is received by the deadline, it will be assumed that you no longer wants counselling; or
 - c. Withdrawn for counselling.

If you Repeatedly Miss Appointments

If you repeatedly miss appointments – either successively or within a period of counselling – it will be assumed that you are no longer able to attend or no longer require counselling. If you wish to resume counselling at a later date you are welcome to contact us to discuss any difficulties, questions or concerns about attending counselling.

If you find that you keep missing or cancelling appointments because of some problem (for example, a change in your timetable, because you would prefer to see a different counsellor or you are unsure whether you are ready to have counselling) please discuss this with your counsellor if possible or with our Reception staff. Other arrangements can always be made.

Attendance for Groups

Counselling is normally suspended while you are attending a group. We ask you to:

1. Ensure you are able to attend all the group sessions before accepting an offer of a place. If not, we will endeavour to offer a place in a later group.
2. If something unexpected does prevent you from attending a group session, let us know in advance or as soon as possible.
3. If the group really does not meet your need, we understand that may happen on occasion, please let us know. In this case, you could ask for a review session with the counsellor who referred you to the group.

Please note: The Head of Service may refuse to offer services to students who repeatedly cancel or miss appointments until assured that the student is able to use the appointments responsibly.