

Privacy Policy

Your privacy is very important to me and you can be confident that your personal information will be kept safe and secure and will only be used for the purpose it was given to me. I adhere to current data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU/2016/679) (the GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003.

This privacy notice tells you what I will do with your personal information from initial point of contact through to after your therapy has ended, including:

- Why I am able to process your information and what purpose I am processing it for
- Whether you have to provide it to me
- How long I store it for
- Whether there are other recipients of your personal information
- Whether I intend to transfer it to another country
- Whether I do automated decision-making or profiling
- Your data protection rights.

I am happy to chat through any questions you might have about this policy and you can contact me using the details at the foot of this document.

'Data controller' is the term used to describe the person/organisation that collects and stores and has responsibility for people's personal data. In this instance, the data controller is me.

I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office, registration number ZB219908.

My lawful basis for holding and using your personal information

The GDPR states that I must have a lawful basis for processing your personal data. There are different lawful bases depending on the stage at which I am processing your data. I have explained these below:

If you have had therapy with me and it has now ended, I will use legitimate interest as my lawful basis for holding and using your personal information.

If you are currently having therapy or if you are in contact with me to consider therapy, I will process your personal data where it is necessary for the performance of our contract.

The GDPR also makes sure that I look after any sensitive personal information that you may disclose to me appropriately.

This type of information is called 'special category personal information'. The lawful basis for me processing any special categories of personal information is that it is for provision of health treatment (in this case counselling) and necessary for a contract with a health professional (in this case, a contract between me and you).

How I use your information

Initial contact

When you contact me with an enquiry about my counselling services I will collect information to help me satisfy your enquiry. This will initially include your name and contact details. Alternatively, another health professional may send me your details when making a referral or a trusted individual may give me your

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details when making an enquiry on your behalf. I may also receive personal information through a third party organisation, for example if you submit an enquiry through an online directory.

After initial contact has been made I will request further information from you for the purposes of assessing our suitability to work together. This may include details of your reasons for seeking my services and personal information regarding your mental health and wellbeing. In the process of agreeing to commence our work together I will also need to collect additional information including the contact details your GP and your emergency contact. If you decide not to proceed I will ensure all your personal data is deleted and/or destroyed within 28 days. If you would like me to delete this information sooner, just let me know.

While you are accessing counselling

Rest assured that everything you discuss with me is confidential. That confidentiality will only be broken if there are grounds to believe that you or another person is in serious danger, or grave physical or psychological harm, or where I have a legal obligation to do so. I will always try to speak to you about this first, unless there are safeguarding issues that prevent this. The reasons I may need to break confidentiality are further outlined in the *Contract for the Provision of Therapeutic Services*, which we will both agree to and sign upon commencement of the therapeutic work.

I will keep a record of the personal data I have collected to help the counselling services run smoothly. These details are kept securely in a locked paper-based filing system at my office. Some personal details, namely your initials, contact phone and email, and your emergency contacts, will also be kept in a password protected portable electronic device, for the purposes of communication between our sessions and for use in emergencies.

I will keep brief, factual handwritten notes of each session, these are kept securely in a locked paper-based filing system at my office. These notes are kept separately to the personal details mentioned above and will be allocated a client reference number to keep this sensitive personal information non-identifiable.

For security I do not retain text messages or voicemails for more than 7 days. If there is relevant information contained in any such messages I will transfer this information into my paper-based filing system. Likewise, I operate an empty inbox policy. Any email correspondence will be deleted no more than 7 days after they have been responded to or actioned. Any relevant information in the contents of these messages will be transferred to my paper-based filing system before deletion.

After counselling has ended

Once counselling has ended I will delete any digital record of your data within 28 days. Your paper records will be securely kept for 7 years from the end of our contact with each other, and will then be securely destroyed. If you want me to delete your information sooner than this, please tell me.

Third party recipients of personal data

There may be an occasion where I legally have to share your information with 3rd Parties. If this is necessary, wherever possible I will ask for your consent before doing so, unless there are safeguarding issues that prevent this, or an emergency that necessitates immediate action to meet my duty of care to you. The reasons this may be necessary are outlined in the *Contract for the Provision Therapeutic Services*, which we will agree to and sign upon commencement of the therapeutic work, and include:

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- where there are grounds to believe that you or another person is in serious danger, or grave physical or psychological harm,
- where I have a legal duty to disclose information under the Children Act 1998, The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Drug Trafficking Act 1994 (or other such legislation which may from time to time come into force).

Data security

I take the security of the data I hold about you very seriously and as such I take every effort to make sure it is kept secure. My paper-based filing system, located at my secure office address, is kept in a locked filing cabinet, the key for which is kept separately in a combination-locked key safe.

Your personal details (name, contact information, GP and emergency contact) will be kept separately to the any sensitive personal information contained in your client notes, which will be allocated a client reference number to keep them non-identifiable.

Any digital information I collect is only kept for the time necessary to provide the service requested. My electronic devices and any relevant individual digital files are all encrypted / password protected and kept securely on my person or stored in a secure location at my office address.

Your rights

Under data protection law, you have rights relating to the information I hold on you. These include:

- Your right of access - You have the right to ask me for copies of your personal information.
- Your right to rectification - You have the right to ask me to rectify personal information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask me to complete information you think is incomplete.
- Your right to erasure - You have the right to ask me to erase your personal information in certain circumstances.
- Your right to restriction of processing - You have the right to ask me to restrict the processing of your personal information in certain circumstances.
- Your right to object to processing - You have the right to object to the processing of your personal information in certain circumstances.
- Your right to data portability - You have the right to ask that we transfer the personal information you gave us to another organisation, or to you, in certain circumstances.

I try to be as open as I can be in terms of giving people access to their personal information. You have a right to ask me to delete your personal information, to limit how I use your personal information, or to stop processing your personal information. You also have a right to ask for a copy of any information that I hold about you and to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You can read more about your rights at ico.org.uk/your-data-matters.

If I do hold information about you I will, when requested:

- give you a description of it and where it came from
- tell you why I am holding it, tell you how long I will store your data and how I made this decision
- tell you who it could be disclosed to
- let you have a copy of the information in an intelligible form.

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You can also ask me at any time to correct any mistakes there may be in the personal information I hold about you.

To make a request for any personal information I may hold about you, please put the request in writing addressing it to the email address at the foot of this document. Except in exceptional circumstances information will be provided within 28 days. I will not charge you a fee for exercising your rights.

If you have any complaint about how I handle your personal data please do not hesitate to get in touch with me using the contact details given at the foot of this document. I would welcome any suggestions for improving my data protection procedures.

If you want to make a formal complaint about the way I have processed your personal information you can contact the ICO, which is the statutory body that oversees data protection law in the UK, at the address below. For more information go to ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint.

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Helpline number: 0303 123 1113