

Whitmoor Counselling and Psychotherapy (WCP) GDPR Policy

Confidentiality

Information shared during counselling remains confidential other than in some exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances, the decision to break with confidentiality will usually be made only after consultation with a clinical supervisor – as per the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP)'s codes of ethics.

Exceptions to confidentiality may be as follows:

- A criminal act, or as required by the process of law.
- Where a failure to do so could lead to the therapist's conviction.
- Information is disclosed about a child being abused or at imminent risk of abuse.
- Where there is an imminent risk of harm to the client or to others.

Data Collection, Use and Retention

Certain client information is collected, stored and processed as detailed below.

Session Logs

To assist the counselling process and to fulfil professional expectations, brief and factual logs are kept of each counselling session. These logs do not contain the therapist's opinions but are an aid to their work, and can be required for the establishment, exercise and defence of legal claims should they arise. Logs are confidential, anonymised and securely stored as described below.

Contact Details

A record of each client's name, address and contact details is securely stored. This information is stored separately from session logs.

Anonymised and Encrypted Information

Session logs (see above) are anonymised by use of a code instead of the client's name. This applies whether logs are paper-based or stored electronically.

A single electronic document links clients' names to their anonymised codes. This document is encrypted and read-protected with a strong password. Encryption and read-protection are in addition to the electronic security measures described below.

Data Retention

Client data is retained for at least five years after counselling has finished. In the case of a child or young person, data will be retained for at least five years after the age of majority. The exact period of retention is flexible – determined by the legal, insurance and BACP best-practice guidelines in force at the time.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, all client data will be permanently destroyed after the retention period.

Secure Storage of Data

Paper-Based Information

Paper-based information is stored in a locked metal box to which only the therapist has a key. From time to time, paper-based information may be scanned and stored electronically, after which the paper copy will be destroyed.

Electronic Information

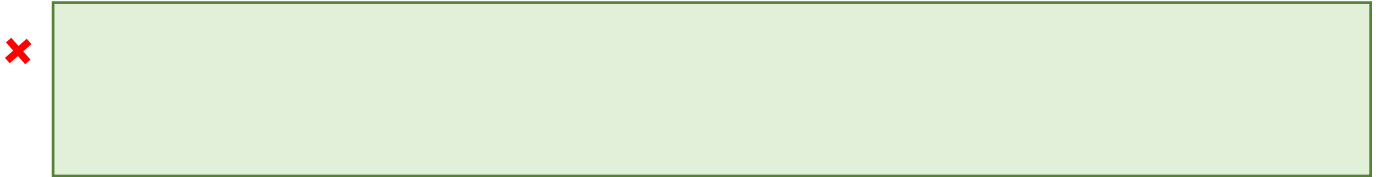
Electronic information is held securely on a dedicated and professionally-hosted cloud storage system, protected with multi-factor authentication. Some electronic information may also be synchronised to the therapist's dedicated laptop computer, which is protected by a strong password and automatic screen lock.

Memory sticks, external hard drives and other removeable media are not used to store client data.

The www.whitmoorcounselling.co.uk web site stores no client information; it is entirely separate from and remote to the secure storage system described above.

Walk and Talk (If Applicable)

'Walk and Talk' is an optional service offered by WCP, combining therapy with a walk on Whitmoor Common and its surrounding areas. Management of any public social interactions during Walk and Talk therapy will be discussed and agreed on a case-by-case basis. The agreed policy is recorded here:



Professional Supervision

In line with BACP best practice, WCP's work is overseen by a professionally-qualified clinical supervisor. Supervision assists with the therapist's ongoing professional development by providing accountability, peer review and discussion of their work. Case work is discussed, but client information is anonymised.

Outside Agencies

The therapist should be made aware of other agencies/professionals working with the client, and will work in accord with other parties for the welfare of the client.

In some circumstances the therapist may need to initiate contact with outside agencies, e.g. GP, Psychiatrist, Mental Health Services, etc. In these circumstances, client permission will always be sought. In the case of imminent harm to the client or another person, the therapist may contact an outside agency without the client's permission.

Contact of Previous Clients

It is generally considered unhelpful for therapist and client to keep in touch after counselling is complete. WCP will not use the information it holds to contact previous clients other than in exceptional circumstances. WCP will not divulge previous clients' contact information to any third party unless legally required to do so.

Additional Data and Information Security Measures

- Clients are accompanied at all times whilst they are on WCP's premises. Written data, and information on computer screens, is read, written and reviewed in a safe area, out of view of clients.
- WCP does not use a client's full name in email communications unless direct to the client.
- Client data and information removed from WCP's premises for the purposes of clinical supervision is kept with the therapist in a lock-box.
- Should a client make contact whilst the therapist is in a public area, the therapist will rearrange the call for a time when privacy can be assured.

Clinical Will

The therapist's clinical supervisor also holds their Clinical Will. Should the therapist die or become seriously ill, the supervisor may access client contact data to inform clients of the situation. If a client has been unable to contact the therapist, they may enquire with the Supervisor:

Name: Mrs Alison MacDonald
Email: alisonmacdonald@outlook.com
Phone: 07939 189748

Therapist Details:

Charlotte Wears BA (Hons), PgDip, MBACP

Charlotte is a trained and fully-qualified Counsellor and Psychotherapist, currently completing a master's degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Charlotte works with adults through a local counselling agency, with young people through a local school, and with both adults and young people in private practice. She is additionally qualified as a Youth Specialist and has twelve years of experience working with young people in relational and counselling roles.

Charlotte's work encompasses all areas of wellbeing, with particular specialisms in self-esteem, eating disorders, self-harm, bereavement and living with chronic illness. Charlotte is a member of the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

Declaration

I agree to Whitmoor Counselling and Psychotherapy collecting, using and retaining my personal information as described in this policy document.

✗ Signed: _____ Date: _____

✗ I am:

- ☐ The client, aged 16 or over
- ☐ The client's parent or legal guardian
- ☐ The client, aged under 16 but deemed to be 'Gillick competent'

If the third box is ticked, the therapist must certify the child's Gillick competence below.

I have assessed the above-named child against Fraser guidelines and deem them to be Gillick-competent for the purposes of receiving counselling and psychotherapy without parental consent.

(Therapist's Signature:) _____ Date: _____