Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Version: October 2026 | Client-Facing

This policy explains how Hope Therapy & Counselling Services and our affiliate counsellors collect, use, store and protect your personal information. Read alongside our Confidentiality Policy and Terms of Service.

1. Our Commitment

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services takes the privacy and security of your personal information seriously. We handle your data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and all other applicable legislation.

2. How Data Responsibilities Are Shared

- Hope Therapy & Counselling Services acts as a data controller for the administrative information we hold about you, including contact details, referral information, and payment records.
- Your counsellor acts as an independent data controller for the clinical records they hold in connection with your sessions.

3. What Personal Data We Collect

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

- Name and contact details (email address, telephone number, postal address).
- Basic background information relevant to matching you with a suitable counsellor.
- Payment records (via secure third-party payment processors — we do not store full payment card details).
- Correspondence between you and Hope Therapy & Counselling Services.

Your Counsellor

- Session notes (held at the counsellor's discretion, in line with professional and legal obligations).
- Safeguarding or risk-related information that arises during sessions.
- Other information you provide that is necessary for therapeutic purposes.

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services does not have access to the content of your sessions or your counsellor's clinical records.

4. The Lawful Basis for Processing Your Data

- Administrative data (contact details, payment records): performance of a contract with you.
- Health and therapeutic data: processing necessary for the provision of health and social care services under Article 9(2)(h) of UK GDPR.

- Marketing communications (if you have opted in): your explicit consent, which may be withdrawn at any time.

5. Data Protection for Clients Aged 16 and 17

A client aged 16 or 17 is presumed in law to be able to consent to their own counselling (Family Law Reform Act 1969, section 8), and they hold their own data rights in relation to that therapy. This means:

- A parent or guardian does not have an automatic right to access the therapy records of a 16 or 17 year old who has consented to their own therapy.
- If a parent or guardian requests access to a young person's records, we will normally decline, unless the young person has given explicit permission or there is a safeguarding reason that overrides confidentiality.
- The young person's own data rights under UK GDPR (access, rectification, erasure, restriction, objection) are fully available to them.
- Where a parent or guardian is funding therapy for a 16 or 17 year old, their payment data will be held separately from the young person's clinical and referral data.

5.1 ICO Children's Code

Because our website is accessible to and used by clients aged 16 and 17, we apply the standards of the ICO Age Appropriate Design Code (Children's Code) to our online service. This means we apply high privacy by default for under-18 users, collect only the minimum personal data necessary, use clear and accessible language in all communications with young clients, and do not use techniques that could encourage young people to provide more data than is needed for their care. Our counsellors and administrative staff are trained to handle data relating to under-18 clients with heightened care and in line with these standards.

6. How Your Data Is Stored and Protected

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

- Secure digital storage with controlled access.
- Encryption and password protection where applicable.
- Restricted access — only authorised personnel may access client information.

Your Counsellor

- Secure systems for storing client records, in line with professional body guidance.
- Records retained only for as long as legally or professionally required.

7. How Your Data Is Used

- Hope Therapy & Counselling Services uses your data to match you with a counsellor, process payments, and manage your referral and sessions.
- Your counsellor uses information you share to provide effective, tailored therapy.
- Your information is never shared with third parties for marketing or non-essential purposes.

8. Data Sharing

- Hope Therapy passes your basic contact details and relevant therapy preferences to your counsellor.
- Your counsellor does not share session content with Hope Therapy & Counselling Services.
- Your counsellor may discuss your case anonymously with a clinical supervisor. No personally identifiable information is shared in this context.
- Information may be shared beyond this only in the safeguarding and legal circumstances described in Section 9.

9. When Data May Be Shared — Safeguarding and Legal Exceptions

- A serious risk of harm to you or another person.
- A legal requirement such as disclosure of serious criminal activity or a court order.
- A safeguarding concern involving a child or vulnerable adult.

10. Your Rights Under UK GDPR

- Right of Access — request a copy of data held about you.
- Right to Rectification — request correction of inaccurate data.
- Right to Erasure — request deletion, subject to legal and professional retention requirements.
- Right to Restrict Processing — ask us to limit how we use your data.
- Right to Object — object to certain types of processing.
- Right to Data Portability — request transfer of data to another provider where applicable.
- Right to Withdraw Consent — where consent is the basis for processing, withdraw it at any time.

To exercise any of these rights, please contact us at contact@hopefulminds.co.uk. We will respond within one calendar month.

11. How Long Is Your Data Retained?

- Hope Therapy & Counselling Services retains administrative data for 7 years following the end of the client relationship.
- Your counsellor keeps clinical records for at least 7 years from their last contact with an adult client.
- For clients who were aged 16 or 17 at any point during their therapy, records are kept until the client's 25th birthday (26th if they were 17 when therapy ended), or for 8 years, whichever is longest.
- Safeguarding records about a child or young person are kept until that person's 75th birthday. Safeguarding records about an adult are kept for 7 years.

12. Questions, Concerns and the ICO

- Email: contact@hopefulminds.co.uk
- Telephone: 0333 043 1850

If you are not satisfied with our response, you have the right to raise a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

- Website: www.ico.org.uk

- Helpline: 0303 123 1113

Contact us: contact@hopefulminds.co.uk | 0333 043 1850 | www.hopefulminds.co.uk

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