Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

Safeguarding Policy

Version: October 2026 | Client-Facing

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E. For emotional crisis support, the Samaritans are available 24 hours on 116 123 (free). For under-18s: Childline 0800 1111 (free, 24 hours). Further resources: www.hopefulminds.co.uk/crisis/

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of every client is our highest priority. Hope Therapy & Counselling Services is committed to ensuring that anyone at risk of harm is appropriately protected. Safeguarding is a fundamental part of our ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities, and those of every affiliate counsellor we work with.

Since Hope Therapy & Counselling Services now works with clients from age 16, our safeguarding responsibilities encompass both adult safeguarding and child safeguarding. We take both with equal seriousness.

2. Designated Safeguarding Lead

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services has a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who leads Hope's own safeguarding responsibilities, including child safeguarding, and supports counsellors with safeguarding concerns:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ian Stockbridge, Director

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

The DSL has appropriate training in both adult and child safeguarding. Counsellors who need guidance on a safeguarding concern should contact the DSL. Clients who wish to raise a safeguarding concern with the organisation may also contact the DSL directly.

3. Child Safeguarding — Clients Aged 16 and 17

Clients aged 16 and 17 are children in law under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. Our safeguarding obligations in relation to these clients are therefore governed by child safeguarding legislation and guidance as well as adult safeguarding frameworks.

Key principles that apply to work with clients aged 16 and 17:

- The threshold for taking safeguarding action with a child is lower than for adults. Counsellors must consider the welfare of a young person holistically, not only in situations of immediate risk.
- All counsellors working with clients aged 16 and 17 hold an Enhanced DBS check with barred list clearance for working with children, as required by law.
- All counsellors working with clients aged 16 and 17 have appropriate child safeguarding training.

- Any concern about the welfare of a client aged 16 or 17 must be considered carefully and, where appropriate, reported to children's social care or other relevant agencies.
- The Working with Young People Policy explains confidentiality and consent in relation to 16 and 17 year old clients in detail.

4. Adult Safeguarding

For adult clients, our safeguarding responsibilities are governed by the Care Act 2014 and related guidance. An adult safeguarding concern arises where an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

5. How Safeguarding Works in Our Service

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services works with independent affiliate counsellors, each of whom is responsible for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns in their day-to-day work with clients. Hope Therapy provides policy guidance and support, and your counsellor tells our Designated Safeguarding Lead about any safeguarding concern, but safeguarding decisions in your therapy sit with your counsellor.

6. The Role of Your Counsellor

Your counsellor is responsible for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns in accordance with:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 (for clients aged 16 and 17).
- The Care Act 2014 (for adult clients).
- The ethical and professional guidelines of their professional body (such as BACP, NCPS, or UKCP).
- Current best practice frameworks and Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

Because safeguarding concerns can be time-sensitive, your counsellor may need to act immediately when they believe there is a serious risk of harm. This may include discussing concerns with you, seeking guidance from their supervisor or the DSL, or reporting concerns to relevant statutory agencies.

7. The Role of Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services provides policy guidance and organisational support in safeguarding matters. We are more actively involved when a counsellor requests guidance, when a matter has implications beyond an individual counsellor's remit, or when Hope itself needs to make a referral.

8. Limits to Confidentiality

While your right to confidentiality is respected, there are circumstances where it may need to be overridden to protect you or others:

- A serious concern that you may harm yourself.
- A concern that another person — including a child or vulnerable adult — may be at risk.
- A legal duty to report, for example under terrorism or child protection law.

Where possible, your counsellor will discuss any safeguarding concern with you before acting. In situations where doing so could increase risk, they may act without prior discussion.

9. What to Do If You Have a Safeguarding Concern

- Speak with your counsellor, who will help assess the situation and take appropriate action.
- If you are unable to speak with your counsellor, contact Hope Therapy & Counselling Services at contact@hopefulminds.co.uk or 0333 043 1850.
- In an emergency: call 999.
- Mental health crisis: Samaritans 116 123 (free, 24 hours).
- For under-18s: Childline 0800 1111 (free, 24 hours).
- Further crisis resources: www.hopefulminds.co.uk/crisis/

10. Questions

If you have any questions about our safeguarding policies or procedures, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ian Stockbridge, at contact@hopefulminds.co.uk.

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

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