

Hannah Russell Counselling

Privacy Policy

In line with European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and as a professional registered with the Information Commissioner's Office this policy outlines how I collect, store and use your information and how I protect your privacy and data rights.

What types of information do I hold?

If you send me an email or call my phone with an enquiry about counselling services I will collect your contact details, name and any further information you provide, in order to answer your query.

If you have placed an enquiry about counselling services via a third-party website to which I respond, I will have collected your contact details, name and any further information you provided in order to respond to your.

As a counselling therapist in private practice I store the following data that can identify you after we begin to work together:

- Biographical information: your title, first name, last name, date of birth
- Contact details: postal address, email address and phone number
- Emergency contact and GP contact details
- Other personal information that you provide me, e.g. reasons for seeking therapy and what you hope to gain from it, health issues and medication.

I also write brief, anonymised session notes.

How do I use this information?

I use the information to contact you about the services that you are enquiring about. I may contact you about making and changing appointments, payments and other queries that arise from our work. I also use the information to run my business, for example to record hours for tax purposes. I do not use your information for any other purposes.

Processing your personal data and how it is stored

This means collecting, storing, using, sharing and deleting your personal information. I only collect information that is essential for clinical or legal reasons.

How do I use your data and what do I do with it?

The information you provide in your initial call, text or email is used to understand your needs, answer any questions you might have, and arrange or send confirmation of your initial session. This is stored in my password-protected mobile phone and / or computer. I hold this information until one month has elapsed since our last contact, whether we work together or not.

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If you place an enquiry about counselling services through a third-party website, to which I privately respond, the information you provide is treated confidentially and used to understand your needs, answer any questions you might have and arrange or send confirmation of your initial session. Where communication between us is undertaken via a third-party website, my access to the website is password protected and accessed via my password-protected phone or computer. I am not responsible for how any personal data or communications between us, through any third party website, is used, stored or protected by that third-party.

Should we agree to work together, the biographical and personal information that you give me is stored securely as a paper record and kept in a locked cabinet. Your name, email address and anonymised phone number are stored securely on my password-protected mobile phone and home computer. I will use your phone number, email or home address to contact you regarding appointments and to reply to you if you contact me. I may also contact you regarding arranging and rearranging sessions, submitting invoices or to send you with information that I have agreed to supply you with, or updating you with information regarding my services. This information is securely destroyed one month after our work together has come to an end.

Any emails or texts containing information in addition to arranging appointment dates and times are destroyed within one month of receipt. If they contain important information this may be printed out and kept with session records.

Brief, anonymised session notes are stored in a locked cabinet and are kept for seven years, in line with professional standards and my insurance company requirements. I store a note of your appointment in my diary using an anonymised code. This is also kept securely for seven years.

I am required to keep financial records for seven years. I use anonymised codes in documentation where possible, and keep records on a password-protected computer.

Confidentiality

Session content is conducted in confidence, and I only document the time, date, session number and brief anonymised notes.

Confidentiality is an important feature of the working alliance and will be maintained in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) with the following exceptions:

- It is a professional requirement of the National Counselling Society's Code of Ethics that I have regular supervision, to ensure that my work with you is as good as it can be. When I discuss casework during

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supervision, I have a duty to keep references to your material anonymous. All supervisors are bound by confidentiality rules.

- If I am concerned that you or someone else may be at significant risk, I may share information with, for example, your GP or the police. If I believe that there is convincing evidence that you or someone else may be seriously harmed I may need to inform an outside authority, for example your GP, or the police. If possible, I would discuss this with you first, unless I felt that this would increase the risk.
- When working with couples, sometimes it is helpful to have some individual sessions as part of ongoing couple counselling. If this is something we agree to, all information shared within individual sessions will be confidential within that session (except in the case of significant risk, outlined above) and will not be shared with the other member of the couple, unless it is raised by the individual themselves in future couple sessions. When working with couples, any communication outside of the sessions with myself will be shared with both partners unless there are safety concerns.
- Some laws require me to break confidentiality in certain circumstances, e.g. Terrorism Act, Drug Trafficking Act.
- If I am compelled to give evidence by a court of law, to release my records or to give evidence.
- During the course of our work, if I become suddenly ill and unable to contact you, I would share your name and phone number with my professional executor who would contact you, in line with good practice in the profession.

Whenever possible, I would aim to discuss any sharing of information with you in advance.

Your permission

I will seek your permission to:

- Contact you via your preferred method and will only leave a message with your consent. If I have responded to you following a general enquiry about counselling services via a third-party website you have given me consent to contact you via the preferences you have shared.
- Share information outside of the above exceptions.
- Use anonymised details for continued professional development (case studies or training).

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- Publish any marketing material such as case studies or testimonials ensuring the use of pseudonyms throughout.

Website

This privacy policy sets out how Hannah Russell Counselling uses and protects any information that you provide when you use this website or contact me via other means such as phone, email or through a general enquiry about counselling services via a third-party website.

By visiting the hannahrussellcounselling.co.uk website you accept and consent to the terms described in this privacy policy.

hannahrussellcounselling.co.uk is made by wordpress.com and you can see their privacy policy here: <https://en-gb.wordpress.org/about/privacy/>

Security

Transmission of data and information via the website is not a secure or an encrypted transmission method for sending your personal data, unless otherwise indicated on the website. Your attention is therefore drawn to the fact that, any information and personal data carried over the internet is not secure. Information and personal data may be intercepted, lost, corrupted or accessed by other people.

Cookies

Cookies are small pieces of data, stored in text files, that are stored on your computer or other devices when websites are loaded into a browser. They are widely used to 'remember' you and your preferences, either for a single visit (through a

'session cookie') or for multiple repeat visits (using a 'persistent cookie'). They ensure a consistent and efficient experience for visitors and perform essential functions such as allowing users to register and remain logged in. Cookies may be set by the site that you are visiting (known as 'first-party cookies'), or by third parties, such as those who serve content or provide advertising or analytics services on the website ('third-party cookies').

For further information about WordPress cookies please visit: <https://en-gb.wordpress.org/about/privacy/cookies/>

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Google Analytics

Each time you visit a website Google analytics automatically tracks information such as (but not limited to) your geographical location, IP address, browser type, browser version, operating system, referral source, page views, length of visit, the times and dates you visit the site, navigation paths, whether you are a new visitor or a returning visitor.

The information provided by Google Analytics may be used to improve the website and services I offer.

Requesting to see your data

You have the right to ask for a copy of the information I hold about you, free of charge, unless I am prevented from doing so for legal reasons. You would need to ask for this information in writing and I aim to provide it in digital form, within 28 days of receiving your request.

In couple's counselling, both clients are part of the contract and, if one client requests a copy of the notes, they can only ask for the parts relating to them unless the second client gives consent. If one partner does not consent, all information relating to them will be redacted.

Controlling your personal information

You are free to restrict the collection or use of your personal information in the following way:

If you have previously agreed to me using your anonymous personal information for continued professional development you may change your mind at any time by emailing me at hannah@hannahrussellcounselling.co.uk

I aim to keep your personal data up to date while we work together. If you believe that any information that I hold about you is incorrect or incomplete, please email me at hannah@hannahrussellcounselling.co.uk and I will correct any information found to be incorrect. You may ask me to delete information that I hold about you. I will do this except for any information that I need to hold for legal/insurance or business purposes.

If you have concerns about how I hold your data

Please discuss any concerns with me in the first instance. If you feel that I have not addressed them, you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/your-personal-information-concerns/>

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Data breaches

Should there be a data breach I will report this to the Information Commissioner's Office and yourself within 72 hours. My data protection registration (ICO) reference is ZB204169.

