

# Hope Counselling Service

## DATA INFORMATION

This notice provides information about your data. From the end of May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect concerning your data. In line with these regulations, we are obliged to tell you about how your data is used and stored.

This information is based on guidelines from: The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), The Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) and Oxygen Professional Insurers.

In line with the data protection law, the Manager of Hope Counselling Service is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. Hope Counselling Service abides by the guidelines and codes of ethics of the ACC. It has professional indemnity insurance with the insurance providers Oxygen.

### Legal Bases to Process Your Data

All people who use data must have a reason to do so. This is called the legal basis/bases for processing data.

The legal bases for processing your data are:

**(a) Consent:** the individual has given clear consent for you to process their personal data for a specific purpose; and

**(b) Contract:** the processing is necessary for a contract you have with the individual, or because they have asked you to take specific steps before entering into a contract as set out in Article 6 of the GDPR.

### Data

The data kept on you includes contact details, biographical details, and brief, factual notes that are a record of each session. Some of this may include what is called 'special category data', which is data about things such as your well-being.

These brief notes are kept in paper form.

Some data may be kept electronically, such as, emails to arrange appointment times.

### Confidentiality

Your data is regarded as confidential. In exceptional circumstances, for example, if somebody's safety is at risk, relevant information may be discussed with an appropriate person, or if there is a legal obligation to disclose. Disclosure would normally occur in consultation with you, and disclosure would be limited to the relevant information.

Therefore, in normal circumstances your case notes will only be read by your Counsellor and your initial contact data will only be read by the Counselling Service Manager and will not be shared with any third party.

In line with professional good practice, our counsellors each have a clinical supervisor and information may be shared with this supervisor whilst they are working together. This information will be anonymised, and the supervisor is similarly bound to keep confidentiality.

In the extreme event of your counsellor's death or incapacitation, the Counselling Service Manager will assume the management of your case file.

### **Security & Storage**

Electronic data (such as emails to confirm appointments) are kept securely on devices protected by a password.

Paper records are kept securely under lock and key in metal filing cabinets. Case notes and client contact details are kept in separate filing cabinets in an office that is only accessed by the Counselling Service personnel.

### **Retention of data**

Data will be kept for seven years after the counselling work has ended. After that, all data will be destroyed by shredding or fire. All electronic data will be deleted seven years after the work has ended.

Data sent by voicemail or email which only relates to arranging/changing appointments may be deleted before the seven-year retention period has expired.

This seven-year retention period is in line with recommendations from the professional indemnity insurers and Professional Counselling Therapy Bodies.

### **Data Rights**

You have the right to access your data. You may have a copy of your data by making a request in writing to the Manager by post or email. We will aim to provide you with this within four weeks.

You have the right to ask for any information you believe to be incorrect to be amended.

In certain circumstances you have the right to ask for your data to be destroyed. As keeping notes is essential for us to provide therapeutic services, we will usually not be able to destroy data whilst you are currently working with a counsellor.

As noted, data is normally kept for seven years after the counselling work has ended. Therefore, if you want your data to be destroyed prior to this seven-year retention period, you can make a request in writing to us and sign a form (which we will send you) to say that you have made this request and you agree to us keeping this form. This form will be kept for

seven years after the work has ended as a record that you requested your data be destroyed.

If you have questions or concerns about how your data is being used or kept, you are free to talk to the Counselling Manager and you can also raise concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office.

### **Making Contact**

We can be contacted via email or phone:

Email: [office@hopecounselling.org](mailto:office@hopecounselling.org)

Phone: 0118 328 3258