

Karen Smith Counselling Privacy Policy

Privacy Policy – Questions and Answers

What is a Privacy Policy?

A privacy policy is a statement or legal document that discloses some or all of the ways a business gathers, uses, discloses, and manages a client's data. This privacy policy will inform service users how I collect, process and use your personal data. In this policy, I aim to demonstrate the purpose & legal basis for data processing, the legal rights to withdraw consent, detail with whom I will share personal data, circumstances where I may need to share data with a third party, how long I will keep personal data & your rights to complain with the Information Commissioner's Office. I will also outline the process to requesting information held about you by me.

What is personal information?

Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual. Individuals can be identified by various means including their name, address, telephone number or email address for example.

Why do you need to process my personal information?

I need to collect personal information to deliver therapy services to you. Your personal information helps me to determine whether I can offer the service that you require, to work ethically and in accordance with my Governing Body – British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP). Your personal information helps guide both my assessment process, and my clinical decision-making during counselling. My contractual obligations to you as a counsellor are the lawful basis for my processing of your personal information.

What is the lawful basis for you processing my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the lawful bases I rely on for processing this information are – contractual and consent. My contractual obligations to you as a counsellor are the lawful basis for my processing of your personal information. I will have a requirement to process sensitive information. This type of information could include details about your racial or ethnic origin; your political opinions; religious beliefs; data concerning your health or sexual orientation. The condition of the GDPR that I apply to the processing of your sensitive data is that of 'pursuant to contract with a healthcare professional'. Consent is a pre-condition of service as data is needed to deliver the service. Consent will be used however, where the sharing of data with a third party is not for the purpose of any legal requirement or contractually agreed.

What types of information will you collect about me?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), I will collect both personal and sensitive data. I will collect information about you in several ways. If you have contacted me via my website www.karensmithcounselling.co.uk, websites collect personal

information by making a record of your computer's ID and your internet protocol (IP) address. Websites also collect information by placing cookies – small files of text that can collect and store information on the hard drive of a computer. If you request a contact via the web form on www.karensmithcounselling.co.uk, I will collect the following information: name, telephone number, email address & your message. During our initial phone consultation, I may ask you to provide brief details of your reasons for accessing counselling and your availability. During an assessment, I will obtain further information that may include GP contact details; emergency contacts; previous therapy; family system; health & physical issues, drug or alcohol use/medications; eating; employment; engagement with other services and goals of therapy. I keep brief notes from your counselling sessions.

How will you collect my personal information?

I will collect your personal information in the following ways: via my website: www.karensmithcounselling.co.uk, over the telephone, in writing, and in person during our meetings.

Who will my personal information be shared with?

There will be some occasions where I share information due to a legal requirement to do so such as a Court order, under Child Protection regulations or where there is a threat of serious harm to yourself or others. There may be times when I share your personal information with a third party with your consent and a request for disclosure. I may also need to share information for the purpose of Clinical Supervision, which is a regular meeting to make sure that the Counsellor is working in a safe and effective manner, identity will not be disclosed. Some of your personal information such as website visits, telephone call data, or payment information, is shared with the website provider, mobile phone operator, or card payment provider respectively. These providers operate under their own privacy policies.

How long will you store my personal information?

Under GDPR, your personal information should be stored for no longer than is necessary. In order to comply with my insurer's terms and conditions, I will store your personal information for 7 years (or 3 years post 18th birthday for minors) following the termination of your therapy. After this time all data will be securely destroyed.

How will you store my personal information?

Personal information will be stored both electronically and physically. Information stored electronically is stored on devices that are password and/or fingerprint I.D. protected. Any paper notes are stored in a secure locked cabinet. Client session notes are kept separate from other personal information and anonymised with a unique personal code. Email and text messages will be deleted after reading unless relevant to the therapy process. Client's will be given a unique reference number for the purpose of any bank transfer to ensure anonymity for accounting purposes.

Can I ask for a copy of the personal information that you store about me?

You can request a copy of any personal information held. Any request that you make to obtain a copy of the personal information that I hold about you is called a 'Subject Access Request'. Should you wish to make a Subject Access Request, you should do so in writing. I will respond to your request within one month.

[Can I request that you delete my personal information?](#)

The GDPR details a right for individuals to have personal data erased. You can request for your personal information to be deleted verbally or in writing and I have one month to respond to your request. There are circumstances where the Right to Erasure does not apply, examples would include: to comply with a legal obligation; for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest & for the establishment, exercise, or defence of legal claims. I may have the right to refuse your request to comply with my insurance terms and conditions.

[How can I complain about the processing of my personal information by Karen Smith Counselling?](#)

Should you have any concerns about the way your personal information is being processed by me, please feel free to put your concerns in writing to me at the earliest opportunity. I will aim to take steps to address any concerns that you raise. You are also within your rights to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on 0303 123 1123, or visit <https://ico.org.uk/concerns> for more information.

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