



## **Privacy Notice**

This policy sets out how we collect, use and store your personal information (information that identified or could identify you), and to ensure transparency when doing this.

Our policy complies with UK law accordingly implemented, including that required by the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). Blue Room Counselling is registered as a “Data Controller” with the Information Commissioners Office.

The law requires us to tell you about your rights and our obligations to you in regard to the processing and control of your personal data. We do this now, by requesting that you read the information provided at [knowyourprivacyrights.org](http://knowyourprivacyrights.org). If you would like any further information about our privacy practises, please contact the DPO on the above contact details.

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) for Blue Room Counselling is Leigh Cooper. She can be contacted on:

Tel: 07305877269

Email: [blueroomcounselling@gmail.com](mailto:blueroomcounselling@gmail.com)

Website: [www.blueroomcounselling.co.uk](http://www.blueroomcounselling.co.uk)

### **1: Consent to hold your data**

Wherever possible, we aim to obtain your explicit consent to process your sensitive data specifically and only for the purposes of providing counselling to you.

If you make contact via our website, social media or phone, you will be asked to provide information by which you can be identified, including your name and contact details. This is implicit consent.

We continue to process your information on this basis until you withdraw your consent or it can be reasonably assumed that your consent no longer exists.

The information you provide is held securely, and will only be used in accordance with the data protection principles, our data protection policy and the ethical principles contained in the (BACP-British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists) ethical framework.

### **2: How we collect information about you**

When you interact directly with us, either via email, in person or telephone, and provide your personal information, this will be stored safely and securely if you decide to use our services, with your consent to do so.

### **3: Information we collect and why**

We use the information you provide when you first contact us, to identify whether we are the right service for you, and to arrange an initial assessment. When you first contact us, we will ask for your name and contact information in order to start the process of establishing whether Blue Room Counselling can provide you with therapy.

### **4: Personal information**

Personal information we collect is details such as name, date of birth, email address, postal address and telephone numbers, as well as any other information you provide in any communications with us.

During the initial assessment, we will re-confirm your name and contact information, along with the following:

- Date of birth
- Home address
- The name and address of your doctor
- Any medication you may be taking
- Any information relevant to you engaging in counselling with us
- A brief description of what is bringing you to counselling and any disabilities you may want to disclose.
- You will be given a counselling contract to read and sign if you decide to continue using our services.
- We may ask you to complete an outcome measure, which is a tool designed to help monitor your wellbeing at the start and end of therapy. You have the right not to complete this.

During therapy:

- Your therapist will keep brief session notes and your identity will be protected. These notes are not shared with anyone, unless we are legally required to do so.
- Personal data and counselling notes are held securely.
- Notes are the property of Blue Room Counselling, and you have the right to view them should you wish, providing that doing so will not, in the therapists professional opinion, cause harm to you or anyone else.
- Only your therapist is authorised to access your notes.

### **5: What we do with the information we collect**

We collect this information to understand your clinical and other needs from counselling and to provide you with a better service. In particular for the following reasons:

- To keep a record of your relationship with us

- To assist with clinical assessment, allocation to an appropriate counsellor and for professional supervision of how we work.
- To provide the counselling services you have requested, and keep you updated with important administrative messages about them.
- We will also use your personal data to meet any legal obligations placed upon us. For instance, when you exercise your rights to see your personal data we hold under the data protection law, or in order to meet any legal compliance placed upon us: or occasions where we may be obliged to disclose information related to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

If you do not provide this information, we will not be able to provide the services you have requested.

## **6: Sensitive personal information**

Data protection law recognises that some categories of personal information are more sensitive. Sensitive personal information can include information about a person's health, race, ethnic origin, political opinions, sex life, sexual orientation, or religion. If you contact us, you may choose to provide details of a sensitive nature.

We will only use this information for the purposes of dealing with your enquiry. We will not pass your details onto anyone else without your permission, except in exceptional circumstances. Examples of this may be, reporting harm to self or posing a threat to others or children.

Sensitive personal information will be stored with extra care and confidentiality, and always in accordance with the privacy policy.

## **7: Legal basis for using your information**

In some cases, we will only use your personal information where we have your consent or because we need to use it in order to fulfil a contract with you.

However, there are other lawful reasons that allow us to process your personal information and one of those is called "legitimate interests". This means that the reason we are processing information is because there is a legitimate interest for Blue Room Counselling to process your information to help us ensure everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

Some examples of where we have a legitimate interest to process personal information is for legal purposes or for complying with statutory requirements.

We process this information under article 6 and 9 of GDPR.

## **8: Marketing**

We do not undertake direct marketing with individuals. We do advertise in publicly accessible areas.

### **9: Sharing your information**

The personal information we collect about you will only be used by your therapist.

We will never sell or share your information with a third party for marketing reasons.

We will only share personal information to a third party with your consent to do so. In exceptional circumstances we may be required by law and our ethical responsibilities to break our confidentiality with you. We may disclose your information if required by law, for example to comply with applicable laws, regulations and codes of practise or in response to a valid request from a competent authority.

### **10: Keeping your information safe**

We take looking after your information seriously. We have implemented appropriate physical, technical and organisational measures to protect the personal information we have under our control, both on and offline.

#### **Storage Methods:**

- Paper: written notes made as part of our Initial Contact/Assessment and ongoing session summaries are kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Writeupp client management platform: I currently store all client data collected during the initial assessment and ongoing written session notes on a secure client management platform called Writeupp. Please visit their website for information on how the keep data secure: <https://www.writeupp.com/security>
- Smartphone: I will store your contact information in my phone in order to contact you in an emergency where I may not have access to your file. This will be cleared once our counselling sessions have ended.
- Email/SMS/WhatsApp: your email address and correspondence will be stored in my email account (currently Gmail) by nature of you contacting me. Electronic correspondence will also be held by the corresponding app (Gmail, Phone's SMS, WhatsApp)
- Website: none of your personal information is stored on my website, other than to momentarily collect & send it to my Gmail account for the purposes of our initial contact.

Unfortunately, the transmission of information using the Internet is not completely secure. Although we do our best to protect your information sent to us this way, we cannot guarantee the security of data transmitted to our site.

### **11:How long we hold your information for**

We only keep it as long as reasonable and necessary for the relevant activity, which may be to fulfil statutory obligations.

### **12: Your rights**

You have various rights in respect of the personal information we hold about you. These are set out below. If you wish to exercise these rights or make a complaint, please contact the DPO on the details at the start of this document.

If a dispute is not settled then we hope you will agree to attempt to resolve it by engaging in good faith with us in a process of mediation or arbitration.

If you are in any way dissatisfied about how we process your personal information, you have a right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office. This can be done at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Access personal information: You can request any personal information we hold about you for free by writing to the DPO. You will need to provide proof of identity to do this.

Right to object: You can object to our processing of personal information where we are relying on a legitimate interest and there is something about your situation which make you want to object to processing on these grounds. Please contact us as noted above, providing details of your objection.

Consent: if you have given us consent to use personal information, you can withdraw your consent at anytime.

Rectification: You can request us to change any information about you which is incorrect or inaccurate.

Erasure: you can ask for deletion of your information where it is no longer necessary for us to use it, have withdrawn consent or where we have no lawful basis for keeping it.

Portability: you can ask us to provide you or a third party with some personal information that we hold about you, in a structured, commonly used, electronic form, so it can be easily transferred.

Restriction: You can ask us to restrict the personal information we use about you, where you have asked for it to be erased or where you have objected to our use of it.

No automated decision making: you have the right not to be subject to automated decisions that will create legal effects or have a similar significant impact on you. We do not currently carry out any automated decision-making.

**Please note, some of these rights only apply in certain circumstances and may not be able to fulfil every request.**