



## **Community Counselling**

### **Data Protection and Privacy Policy**

Any personal information provided by you to Community Counselling through any means (verbal, written, in electronic form, or by your use of our website) will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation for the purposes for which you have given consent, to provide the service you have requested from us, and to meet the legitimate interests of the charity.

#### **Introduction**

Community Counselling (the “data controller”, referred to below as “us” or “we”) is committed to protecting your privacy. Please read the following in order to learn more about Community Counselling’s privacy policy and how we collect and use information you give us.

This policy only applies to data collected by Community Counselling staff and volunteers, and via our own forms and website. Third party agents and any website which are linked to ours are not covered by this policy. If you have any queries concerning your personal information or any questions on our use of the information, please contact the Manager in writing or by telephone.

When you request counselling with Community Counselling or volunteer with us, or otherwise provide your personal details to us, you will be asked to consent to our processing of your data under the terms of this policy.

#### **What information do we collect?**

- **Counselling Requests.**  
Registering with us to request access to our counselling service can be done in person, by phone or on paper. Our request process involves providing us with your name and telephone number. We may also request information about your availability, therapeutic issues and other details which we think relevant to processing your request.
- **Initial Assessment Appointments.**  
At any initial assessment we ask about your current personal, social, medical and financial circumstances. We also ask about your family history as well as the issues



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which are affecting you now. We require this information so that we can decide about our offer of counselling to you, to assign you to a counsellor, and to manage the service we provide to you.

- **Volunteer Placements.**

Counsellors may apply for placement by form, letter or email. They may also be interviewed. We ask about your qualifications, experience and professional memberships. We also ask for your name, address, telephone numbers, email address, and address and telephone details for referees, as well as people we may need to contact for you in an emergency.

- **Other Forms**

The information you give us on our forms (including all enquiry and applications forms) may include your name, postal address, email address, phone number and other messages to us.

### What do we use your information for?

We use information held about you in the following ways:

- To provide clients with the professional counselling service requested from us.
- To enable us to offer appropriate opportunities and support to our counsellors.
- To offer suitable counselling appointments, and to allocate clients and counsellors for counselling.
- To notify you about changes to your appointments and other changes to our service.
- To seek feedback from you on your experience of counselling with us.
- To improve our service to ensure it is provided in the most effective manner for you and for us.
- To administer our service, including the arrangement of appointments, financial control, data analysis and statistics.
- To keep in touch with those who consent to this for the purpose of organisation, service and professional development.
- To fulfil our administrative, legal and contractual obligations to our volunteers.

### What information do we share?

We will **not share** any information about you with other organisation or people, **except** in the following situations:

- Consent.



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Community Counselling may share your information with professional carers or other whom you have requested or agreed we should contact.

- Serious harm.  
Community Counselling may share your information with the relevant authorities if we have reason to believe that this may prevent serious harm being caused to you or another person.
- Compliance with law.  
Community Counselling may share your information where we are required to by law or by the regulations and other rules to which we are subject.
- As part of the backups of encrypted data processed and held by professional IT security companies.

### How do we keep your information safe?

All information you provide to us is stored as securely as possible. All paper forms and correspondence are kept in a locked filing cabinet at St Bart's Centre, in a locked office area. All electronic records are stored by reputable service providers using secure internet 'cloud' technology.

Your identifiable personal material is kept separately from any session note and other descriptive material. Client notes and documentation are destroyed five years after the end of counselling. Personal contact details are destroyed/deleted after ten years of no contact or updates.

### Your rights

You have the right to ask us to provide a copy of the information held by us in our records. You also have the right to require us to correct any inaccuracies in your information. If you would like to do this, please contact the Manager in writing or by telephone.

You may withdraw your consent for us to hold and process your data at any time. However, if you do this while actively receiving counselling at Community Counselling, your counselling would have to end. You can withdraw your consent by contacting the Manager and requesting our Consent Withdrawal Form.

### Changes to this policy

We may edit this policy from time to time. If we make any substantial changes we will notify you by posting a prominent announcement on our website.

### Consent



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I have read this Data Protection and Privacy Policy and consent to Community Counselling holding and using my personal information in the ways and for the purposes outlined above.

Signed:

Date:

Name: