

Confidentiality

Pathfinder Counselling Ltd works within the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework (2018) which requires counsellors to offer the highest possible level of confidentiality to respect the client's privacy, keeping trust and client autonomy. There are exceptions where a counsellor may need to break confidentiality; the details of when this would occur are listed below. This Policy is in place to provide guidance to staff and information for clients on how confidentiality can be maintained, the circumstances it may be breached and what type of information is held.

Responsibilities

All staff working at Pathfinder Counselling Ltd are responsible for keeping sensitive information confidential and only shared on a 'need to know basis'. Counsellors have an added responsibility to respect the confidentiality of their clients in line with the BACP Ethical Framework (2018)

Confidentiality will be outlined in the agreement of the service discussed during the initial contract when working with a client and a signed written copy of this will be required for each client.

Client anonymity will be always maintained (unless subject to the following exceptions as mentioned below), including in client notes and supervision.

Limits of Confidentiality

Counsellors will not pass on personal information about their clients (including information on attendance at counselling sessions) to anyone outside of Pathfinder Counselling Ltd:

- If the Counsellor believes that the Client or others are at risk of harm.
- If the client shares information relating to the following legislation:
 - The Terrorism Act (2000) requires that the counsellor disclose any belief of suspicion of acts of terrorism.
 - The Drug Trafficking Act (1986) requires the counsellor to disclose information of any individual making money through drug trafficking.
 - Money Laundering (the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Sanctions and Anti Money Laundering Act 2018) require the counsellor to disclose information.
- The Counsellor may also pass on information if the counsellor would be liable to a court procedure if the information was not disclosed
- Except for legal requirements under legislation, the counsellor will usually attempt to gain consent from the client before passing on information, if the counsellor is unable to do so they may pass on the information to the relevant person/agency directly.

To respect confidentiality of other clients, while attending appointments at Pathfinder Counselling Ltd premises or attending a walking therapy session, we request that clients do not bring anyone else with them. There are exceptions when a third party may need to attend the counselling session these include a carer for those with a disability or additional needs (including childcare).



Disclosure of information

It is a responsibility of all staff to only pass on information on a 'need to know' basis. Such as administrators communicating appointment details. Client information should never be shared with other clients and counsellors must only breach confidentiality in the circumstances mentioned above.

Whenever possible consent to pass on information should be obtained in writing from the client, and where consent is verbal this to be noted in the client's file.

Data Protection/ GDPR - General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

Please refer to our Privacy Policy for more detailed information on how we hold client information and store sensitive and personal data.

Client information (including notes) is to be stored securely in a locked storage unit with limited access to Pathfinder Counselling Ltd Staff only.

Records or client information are not left unattended or in an unlocked area.

Client notes are not recorded, electronically.

All client information is kept on file for seven years, when then it will be destroyed appropriately in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), Data Protection Act (1998) and our Retention Policy.

To respect the confidentiality and privacy of the client, client information and notes are to be filed anonymously and contain no direct references to client's names.

Client statistical data may be used for monitoring service performance; no client is named or identified during this process.

Retention Policy

Pathfinder Counselling Ltd will hold client information and notes for no longer than seven years after the client has left the service. This information will be stored securely in line with the GDPR - General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and Data Protection Act (1998). After seven years all client data will be destroyed unless legally obliged not to do so by a court order.