



## Privacy Notice and Data Protection Statement - Ashore Counselling and Therapy

Ashore Counselling and Therapy is committed to protecting your privacy and complying with current UK data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (2003).

This privacy notice explains how your personal information is collected, used, and protected from your first contact with me through to after therapy has ended.

### 1. Data Controller

The data controller responsible for your personal information is:

**Fiona Paterson**

Lead Counsellor and Director, Ashore Counselling and Therapy

Email: [info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com](mailto:info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com)

I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

### 2. What Information I Collect

I may collect and store the following information:

- Name, date of birth, contact details (phone/email/address)
- Emergency contact information
- GP details (if you choose to share them)
- Session notes and clinical information
- Therapy-related measures or assessments we may agree to use
- Email correspondence and website enquiry forms

If you choose not to proceed with therapy, your initial contact details will be securely deleted within one year, or sooner if you request.

### 3. Lawful Basis for Processing

The GDPR requires a lawful basis for processing your data. I use:

- **Contract** – to deliver counselling/psychotherapy services.



- **Legal obligation** – where I must share information (e.g. safeguarding, crime, risk of serious harm).
- **Legitimate interests** – for retaining minimal records after therapy has ended, or for anonymised use in professional development.
- **Special category health information** is processed where necessary for the provision of counselling and psychotherapy services and for the establishment, exercise, or defense of legal claims where applicable.

#### 4. How Your Data is Stored

- Paper records are stored in a locked cabinet.
- Digital records are stored securely on encrypted devices with password protection.
- Session notes are anonymised/pseudonymised (e.g. coded, not linked directly to your name).
- Emails are stored in a secure account and deleted if no longer relevant.
- Text/WhatsApp messages are not retained for more than one year.

#### 5. Confidentiality & Sharing of Data

Everything you share with me is confidential, with the following exceptions:

- Where you give consent for information to be shared.
- Where I am required by law (e.g. court order).
- Where there is risk of serious harm to yourself or others, or in cases of fraud/crime.
- In supervision, where I may discuss aspects of my work to ensure best practice. Anonymity is always preserved.

Wherever possible, I will seek to discuss this with you before taking action.

#### 6. Retention of Records

- Client records are kept for up to **7 years** after the end of therapy (in line with professional guidance).
- Anonymised notes may be kept indefinitely for professional development or research purposes, but no client will be identifiable.
- You may request earlier deletion of your personal records.



## 7. Your Rights

You have the right to:

- Access the data I hold about you.
- Request correction or deletion of your personal data.
- Restrict or object to the processing of your personal data.
- Withdraw consent where processing is based on consent.
- Lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you make a request, I will:

- Give you a description of the data I hold and why.
- Tell you how long it will be stored for.
- Explain who it may be disclosed to.
- Provide you with a copy in an intelligible form.

Where a request is unclear, or additional information is required to identify the information requested, the response period may be paused until clarification is received. Searches undertaken in response to requests will be reasonable and proportionate in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

### Data Protection Complaints

If you have concerns about how I have handled your personal information, you may make a complaint directly to me by email at [info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com](mailto:info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com).

I will acknowledge your complaint and investigate it fairly and promptly. I will provide a response explaining the outcome of my investigation and any action taken.

If you remain dissatisfied with my response, you have the right to raise your concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

## 8. Website Visitors & Cookies

When you visit the **Ashore Counselling and Therapy website**, anonymised data such as IP address, browser type, and usage patterns may be collected for analytics purposes.

- I use website analytics to improve services; no attempt is made to identify visitors.
- Like most websites, cookies may be used to improve functionality. You will be informed and given the option to accept or decline.
- If you fill in a contact form, your details will be stored temporarily by the website host before being securely transferred to me.



## 9. Data Security

I take the security of your personal information seriously and use both physical and electronic measures to ensure your data is protected.

- Hard copy data is stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.
- Digital data is encrypted and password-protected.
- Where third-party service providers process information outside the UK, appropriate safeguards will be in place in accordance with UK data protection law.
- I do not make decisions about clients solely through automated processing, profiling, artificial intelligence systems, or similar technologies.

## 10. Contact

If you have any questions, requests, or concerns about this policy or your personal data, please contact:

**Fiona Paterson**

Lead Counsellor and Director

Ashore Counselling and Therapy

Email: [info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com](mailto:info@ashorecounsellingandtherapy.com)