



Confidentiality Policy

Paper Plane Counselling Ltd is committed to preserving the confidentiality of all clients. This includes protecting the fact that the client is attending therapy with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd as well as protecting the client's data (including contact information and the content of the therapeutic sessions).

Client contact information, assessment information and brief notes of the content of client sessions are recorded and stored securely in accordance with the systems described in our Privacy Policy and our Information Governance Policy and Procedure. Our systems comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The fact that a client is attending therapeutic sessions and the content that a client discusses in their therapeutic session(s) remains confidential between the therapist and the client, with the following exceptions:

- In accordance with the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists' (BACP) Ethical Framework*, all counsellors consult a supervisor on a regular basis to ensure their practice is ethical and that they are working in the best interests of their clients. The counsellor's supervisor is verbally told broad overarching themes of counselling sessions. The supervisor is not told the client's real name nor contact details and does not have direct access to written records of the client's electronic or paper-based data. The supervisor contracted by Paper Plane Counselling Ltd is an experienced therapist who adheres to the BACP's Ethical Framework. Supervision sessions are usually conducted online via the encrypted platform Zoom.

* British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018) *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* published by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

- The counsellor may contact the client's GP or another professional if she believes that the client is likely to cause significant harm to themselves or somebody else. This would be done if judged to be in the client's best interests in order to keep them and/or other people safe. If this happens the counsellor will make every effort to discuss the situation with the client first before sharing information in order to agree what information to share and with whom.
- The counsellor may contact relevant authorities if she believes children or vulnerable adults are at risk of significant harm in order to safeguard their development and wellbeing (this applies to both "real world" and online risks). If this happens the counsellor will make every effort to discuss the situation with the client first to agree what information to share and with whom; unless to do so would be to endanger the children and/or vulnerable adults concerned.
- The client's data must be shared with another organisation if it is legally necessary to do so. This happens if the counsellor becomes aware that the client is planning, or has participated in, a crime such as money laundering, terrorism or murder.
- If the counsellor is subpoenaed to give evidence in court then she is legally required to do so and to discuss the client's data if necessary.
- In the event of the counsellor becoming incapacitated due to an unforeseen emergency then the client's contact details will be passed to the supervisor contracted by Paper Plane Counselling Ltd. This person will contact all clients currently engaged in sessions to explain the situation and discuss alternative support.

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Additional considerations for clients under the age of 18 and their parents and legal guardians

Paper Plane Counselling Ltd works with child clients under the age of 18 only with the explicit and informed consent of the child client's parent or legal guardian. Therefore, the parent or legal guardian is fully aware that the child client is attending sessions, and is aware of the location of these sessions and the time they are taking place.

The parent or legal guardian is asked to meet with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd for an initial assessment meeting. If the child client is not present at this meeting then the information given to Paper Plane Counselling Ltd by the parent or legal guardian at both the initial enquiry and assessment stages is kept confidential to the parent or legal guardian (i.e. the child client is not told the detail of the information that has been given).

The parent or legal guardian is asked to keep in touch with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd for the purpose of bringing the child client to sessions, for arranging payment of any necessary fees and for making Paper Plane Counselling Ltd aware of any change of circumstances which might affect the child client's counselling. In the case of online sessions, the parent or legal guardian has a responsibility to ensure that the child client is in a safe and comfortable place during their counselling sessions where they cannot be overheard nor their screen seen by others.

The parent or legal guardian of the child client is invited to periodically contact Paper Plane Counselling Ltd to discuss the child client's counselling. This is an opportunity to ask questions about the counselling process and how the child client can best be supported at home, at school (if relevant) and in the community. However, Paper Plane Counselling Ltd will only speak with the parent or legal guardian with the child client's knowledge and agreement that the conversation will take place and what information will be shared with the parent or legal guardian. Afterwards, the child client will be told the key themes which were discussed in each conversation between Paper Plane Counselling Ltd and the child client's parent or legal guardian.

If Paper Plane Counselling Ltd becomes concerned that the child client is at risk of causing significant harm to themselves or somebody else, then the counsellor will first discuss the situation with the child client and seek to agree who to share information with in order to keep the child client (or another person) safe. This may include informing the child client's parent or legal guardian if the child client is in agreement, or without the child client's agreement if it is essential that the child client's parent or legal guardian is aware of the situation in order to keep the child client or somebody else safe.

Clients referred and/or funded by an external agency

If a client is referred and/or funded by an external agency (e.g. an employer or an insurance provider) then the external agency will already be fully aware that the client is attending sessions with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd.

Paper Plane Counselling Ltd will routinely inform the external agency of the dates of all sessions held for the purpose of invoicing.

Some referring agencies request a report from Paper Plane Counselling Ltd about the progress of the client's counselling sessions. If this applies, Paper Plane Counselling Ltd will inform the client of what information the referring agency requests at the initial assessment stage and will agree with the client what information will be shared. The client will be offered a copy of any such report written about them by Paper Plane Counselling Ltd.



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Other agencies

Other agencies (including but not limited to GPs and schools) are not informed that the client is attending sessions with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd except in the event of the situations described in the bullet points above.

If the client wishes Paper Plane Counselling Ltd to inform another agency that they are attending sessions then they will be asked to sign a consent form for this. For child clients, the parent or legal guardian of the child client will be asked to sign written consent and the child client will be asked for verbal consent. No information is given to the other agency about the content of sessions without the explicit and additional consent of the client (and the child client's parent or legal guardian).

If a client is working with one or more professionals from another agency (including but not limited to Social Services, Probation Services, NHS Adult Mental Health Care Services, NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) then the client will be asked if they wish Paper Plane Counselling Ltd to have contact with these professionals and if so will be asked to sign explicit written consent for this. In certain circumstances, this consent will be required in order to form a contract with Paper Plane Counselling Ltd. When Paper Plane Counselling Ltd has contact with other professionals in this manner, this is for the purpose of working to best support clients by ensuring that care is "joined-up" and is not being duplicated or is inadvertently conflicting. The fact that the client is attending sessions is disclosed but the content of sessions remains confidential between Paper Plane Counselling Ltd and the client, with the exception of the circumstances described in the bullet points above.