

Muse Privacy Notice

We at Muse Counselling & Wellbeing (hereafter referred to as Muse) are committed to providing our clients with a safe, ethical service, abiding by legislation relevant to the service we deliver. In order to do this, we collect and store your personal contact details and records of your counselling sessions. This Notice explains why this is necessary and what we may do with this information right from your first point of contact with our service until after your counselling has come to an end. Your privacy is of paramount importance to us and you can access our service with confidence in the knowledge that all personal information collected will be stored securely and only utilised for the purpose of which it was given. We adhere to current data protection legislation in this area, including the **General Data Protection Regulation (EU/2016/679)** – hereafter referred to as GDPR, the **Data Protection Act 2018**, and also the **Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2013**. Muse also adheres to the ethical framework of the **British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists** (hereafter referred to as the BACP) which provides us with guidelines which protect the privacy of clients and confidentiality.

What is my lawful basis for holding and using your personal information?

Depending on which stage of your journey with us that I am processing your information it may impact what legislation is relevant and the GDPR states that we must have a lawful basis for processing your information. Where you have had therapy with one of our counsellors which has now come to an end your counsellor will use the basis of “legitimate interest” as grounds for holding and using your personal information. If you are currently undertaking therapy with one of our counsellors, or have contacted the service to enquire about services, we will only process personal information which is necessary to the performance of our contract. In line with the GDPR, we will look after any sensitive information you disclose to us appropriately. This is referred to as “special category personal information” and where the processing of this type of information occurs we will do so on the lawful basis of the provision of healthcare treatment, in this case counselling sessions. This is necessary for the contract between you and a healthcare professional, which in this case is you (the client) and one of our counsellors (healthcare professional).

How your information is used.

We would like to assure you that we at Muse will never use your personal information or data for any purpose other than the administration of the counselling service that is being provided. This includes arranging, cancelling or rescheduling appointments / sessions. Any information collected and stored will only be held for as long as necessary and in line with the guidance of the **Information Commissioner’s Office**.

Initial Contact.

When you first contact us at Muse to book a first appointment some basic information will be collected to facilitate us in processing your enquiry. This will include your name and a method of contact, such as a phone number or email address, so that an appointment can be booked in for you with one of our counsellors. This information is requested so that one of counsellors can make contact with you to arrange your session/s or in the event of your counsellor needing to cancel or reschedule your appointment in the rare event unforeseen circumstances. If you would prefer that we **do not** contact, you under any circumstances then you are not obligated to provide us with a method of contact. It is also the case that your employer or another organisation may send us your details when making a referral, or perhaps a relative who is enquiring about the service on your behalf. If an enquiry is made and you choose not to proceed we will delete all your personal data within a time period of one month. In the event of you wishing us to delete your data more quickly then please let us know so that we can facilitate this for you.

Whilst accessing counselling / therapy.

Your counsellor will use your email address or phone number to provide you with written confirmation of session times, if you have given consent for this. Arranging and confirming sessions will be the only purpose for which we will use your phone number and /or email address unless you have agreed with your counsellor to receive information which is relevant to your counselling sessions which will be sent via the email address you have provided.

At the beginning of your first appointment your counsellor will request that you complete a personal details form which will contain your name, address, date of birth, contact information, next of kin contact information, and the name address and contact information for your GP. This information is stored in a locked filing cabinet and is only accessible to your counsellor and administration staff. Please be aware that your counsellor will not routinely make contact with your next of kin or your GP. This will only happen where your counsellor is obligated to, based on their duty of care towards you. To fulfil their duty of care towards you, your counsellor, will only make contact with your GP if it is necessary and where possible they will discuss this with you beforehand. Your counsellor will also not routinely inform your GP of your attendance as this is considered to be confidential information.

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us at Muse and we take this opportunity to assure you that what is shared in your sessions with your counsellor will be kept private. As members of the BACP we adhere to their professional code of ethics and we will only breach confidentiality where there is a legal or ethical obligation for disclosure. The need to disclose confidential information can include where there is a risk of serious harm occurring either to

yourself, a minor or a vulnerable adult, for example, if you were to share information regarding the abuse or neglect of a child. Another instance where your counsellor may have to breach confidentiality would include information shared relating to serious criminal activity or intent or where they are required to do so by a court of law. Your counsellor will endeavour to discuss this with you before breaking confidentiality, however, there may be safeguarding issues that prevent them from doing so as your safety and that of others is our priority.

All of our counsellors are required to undertake regular support in the form of supervision, during which your counsellor may discuss your work. This process is also bound by the rules of confidentiality and will be done without identifying you. Supervisors used by our counsellors also abide by the BACP code of ethics regarding confidentiality. The supervision process helps to ensure that you are receiving a safe and ethical service with an appropriate standard of care to meet your needs.

Your counsellor will keep brief notes of your counselling sessions for the purpose of facilitating and assisting in your work together. These notes can allow your counsellor to keep track of the issues you are working on and are for their use only. These notes do not identify you or include any of your personal details and are securely locked in a filing cabinet with only your counsellor having access. To further protect your anonymity, they are stored separately from your any forms which include your personal details such as your personal details form and the contract you will have signed with your counsellor in your first session.

After your counselling has ended.

There are multiple reasons why counsellors must retain notes and personal data after your counselling journey has come to an end. This includes responsibilities regarding financial transactions for tax and accounting purposes, meaning personal information must be held for as long as legally required. It is also reasonable to say that retaining notes for a period of time can facilitate more effective support should you contact the service again in the future. As mentioned above, session notes do not include any identifying information and they will continue to be stored securely after you have finished with the service for a period of seven years, which is in line with current industry standards and relevant legislation. After this time your notes will be confidentially destroyed and become unrecoverable to anyone.

The form retained which includes your personal details will be confidentially destroyed when your counselling comes to an end, however, we do still need to keep a record of your name, date of birth, and client reference number (corresponds to the client reference number on your client notes) for a period of seven years as it allows your counsellor to identify your notes if necessary.

Counselling Notes

Counselling notes are very brief and does not contain information that would directly identify a service user. We do not hold word for word conversational transcripts or in-depth details for the provision of third party evidence. The notes merely contain date and time of attendance, short summative of presenting issues, interventions applied and any agreements made between the counsellor and service user. The note on therapy sessions for person over the age of 18years will be kept for a period of five years and for children and young people 5 years after they turn the age of 18years of age. All service users have the legal right to instruct MUSE to safely and ethically destroy their notes at any time after their therapy has ended under GDPR 2018. In this instance the service user will be asked to signed an opt out document to assist MUSE in adhering to the requirements of the terms and conditions of the Professional Indemnity Insurance.

Third party recipients of personal information.

Your counsellor may share a limited amount of personal data with third parties in order to fulfil their legal obligations relating to tax and accounting purposes and also to in order to provide you with the counselling service. For example, our accountant is permitted to access Muse invoices and if you call the agency to make initial contact or to cancel a session for example then the person who takes your call with hold your information to pass it on to your counsellor or to facilitate with making or rescheduling sessions. In most instances your counsellor will provide you with a number you can contact them on directly once you start therapy, however, this will be discussed with you during your first session.

Where Muse has contacted with a supplier to carry out tasks, you can rest assured that they have been carefully selected, and we will only work with organisation who have agreed to use information shared for the sole purpose of carrying out the task for which we have engaged their services. We are also committed to never sharing your personal data or contact details for the purposes of marketing or research.

In the event that your sessions are paid for or arranged via a third party, such as your employer, then the only information shared will be dates of attendance or non-attendance for the purposes of invoicing and payment. Details of what is discussed in your counselling sessions will remain confidential and will only be shared if you give your counsellor written permission to do so.

Data security

We at Muse take the security of data and information we hold about you very seriously. Any technology utilised such as laptops and work mobiles are password protected and have anti-

virus software installed and running. Email correspondence will be deleted within one month of it being sent, unless it is necessary to keep it. In the event of us needing to keep the information sent in emails it will be printed out and then stored securely in our locked filing cabinet with the email itself being deleted.

Visitors to our website

When you access our website you are consenting to the information collection and use practices detailed in this privacy notice. In the event that you choose to contact us using the contact form provided on the website none of the data you provide will be stored on the website or passed to any third party data processors. The data will instead be collated into an email and sent to Muse over the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP). This data is encrypted and protected by TLS (sometimes referred to as SSL) before being sent via the internet. The email is subsequently decrypted by local computers and devices.

Our website uses cookies and Google Analytics. Almost all websites use cookies which are essentially small files that are out on your computer by websites as you use or browse them. They can store information which can have privacy implications for you. Google provides the Google Analytics service which gathers data on how people use the website and then provides visitor statistics and details about page views for example. This information is used by many website owners in order to improve the users online experience of this resource.

Where an interactive map facility is available a trusted third party may embed elements to the page, which may make the website more helpful to the visitor, however, we do note that most of these also utilise their own cookies. This applies to third parties such as Google Maps. As we do not have control of these cookies we can make no guarantees about what they do. In many of these cases the cookies are used to generate information similar to that of Google Analytics. In fact, many of them use Google Analytics and as such if you opt-out of Google Analytics it will also opt you out of the use of cookies. If you would like to opt-out of Google Analytics or other services provided by Google, you can do so here –

<http://tools.google.com/dlpage/goptout>

and

<https://www.google.com/dashboard/>.

Your rights

Under GDPR (2018) guidelines you are afforded the following rights: The right to request access to the personal information I store and process about you. You have the right to ask that corrections to be made to the information held about you or for your personal information to be deleted. You may ask me to restrict the processing of your personal information and in some cases object to the processing of it altogether. If you would like to know more about your rights you can access more information at:

ico.org.uk/your-data-matters

If you would like to make a request relating to your rights regarding your personal data then you can speak to your counsellor and make a written request by emailing **???**. There may be some instances where we are unable to comply with your request, for example, where we are compelled to retain your records by a court of law. Where the request is deemed extreme in nature there may be a charge incurred by you to facilitate it where appropriate.

Queries

The term “data controller” is used to describe the person or organisation that collects, stores and has responsibility for people’s personal data. In this instance the data controller is **???** who is registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office. The registration number for **???** is **???**. If you have any queries about this privacy policy or the way in which your personal information is handled you can contact Muse’s data controller via telephone on **???** or by email at **???**

Complaints

If you have a complaint about how your personal information is handled by Muse or one of its counsellors then please do not hesitate to contact our data controller at **???**. If you feel it is necessary to make a formal complaint about how we have handled, stored or processed your personal information you can do so through the Information Commissioner's Office who are statutory body overseeing data protection law in the UK. If you would like more information about making a formal complaint then you can access this via:

ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint

Changes to this privacy notice.

This privacy notice is occasionally updated to stay current with our ethical and legal obligations relating to privacy and data collection.