

Privacy Policy

Elaine Benson Counselling and Psychotherapy - Privacy Notice

Introduction

Your privacy is very important to me and your personal information will be kept safe and secure and will only be used for the purpose it was given to me. I adhere to current data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU/2016/679) (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Reference No: ZB035618, and I am the data controller. The ICO has my postal address if needed.

This privacy notice tells you how I collect and process your personal data through your use of my website. By providing me with your data, you warrant to me that you are over 18 years of age. My contact details are:

Name: Elaine Benson. Phone Number: 07742183681. E-mail:

elaine.benson@protonmail.com

What type of information I have and how I use it:

I currently collect and process the following information. When you contact me with an enquiry about my counselling services, I will gather some personal information to help me process your enquiry which will include: Your contact details such as name, address, date of birth, telephone number, email address, plus details of your GP, an emergency contact number, and any other information pertaining to your assessment and any future plan for therapy. In some cases, if it is relevant to the therapeutic service being requested and contracted for, I may also be collecting special category data such as gender identity, sexuality, medical history or ethnicity. If you decide not to proceed with therapy, I will ensure all your personal data is deleted within one month. If you would like me to delete this information sooner, just let me know.

How I get the information and why I have it

Most of the personal information I process is provided to me directly by you to enable the provision of therapy; this includes an assessment to ascertain the appropriateness of therapy at this time. Data can be collected via information added to my contact form, and/or via the telephone, email or face to face. All are subject to the same levels of privacy. I may also receive personal information indirectly, from the following sources in the following scenarios: your GP or other health professional may send me your details if they make a referral. In the case of children and young people under the age of 16, or a vulnerable adult, a parent or trusted individual may give me your details when making an enquiry on your behalf.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the lawful bases I rely on for processing this information are contract, because I need to process the details in order to provide my business service, and to fulfil legal obligation as I need to provide tax records.

What I do with the information we have:

I use the information that you have given me in order to create a contract for our work together, and to formulate a plan for any therapy you consent to take part in. This information will only be shared with third-parties in the case of a medical emergency, or issues of safeguarding of legal responsibility as described in my confidentiality statement below.

How I store your information:

I take the security of the data I hold about you very seriously and as such I take every effort to make sure it is kept secure. All electronic records are password protected and any written notes are kept in a locked filing cabinet. I keep contact information for the length of your therapy, after which time it will be deleted or shredded. Any written notes are securely kept for a period of seven years, after which they will be shredded. If any data is lost, stolen or accidentally deleted, I will contact you to inform you of this and inform ICO as appropriate. It is important to bear in mind that no internet-based platform is 100% secure, and this includes emails. Unauthorised access beyond my control is not something I can be held responsible for. While my email account and website are secure, engaging with other email accounts could involve accounts that are less secure, and therefore there is a possibility of being vulnerable to being hacked. I do bear this in mind and do everything I can to protect your personal information.

THIRD-PARTY LINKS

This website may include links to third-party websites. Please be aware that clicking on those links may allow third parties to collect or share data about you. If you do visit other websites, I encourage you to read the privacy notice of the website you visit. I am not responsible for said privacy policies, and I have no control over other websites.

Your data protection rights

Under data protection law, you have rights including:

Your right of access: You have the right to ask me for copies of your personal information.

Your right to rectification: You have the right to ask me to rectify information you think is inaccurate. You also have the right to ask me to complete information you think is incomplete.

Your right to erasure: You have the right to ask me to erase your personal information in certain circumstances.

Your right to restriction of processing: You have the right to ask me to restrict the processing of your information in certain circumstances.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data in certain circumstances.

Your right to data portability: You have the right to ask that I transfer the information you gave me to another organisation, or to you, in certain circumstances.

You are not required to pay any charge for exercising your rights. If you make a request, I have one month to respond to you.

As a security measure to ensure that any personal information is only shared with the person who has the right to access it, I may need to request specific information from you in order to confirm your identity and ensure your right to access your personal data (or to exercise any of your other rights). I may also contact you to ask you for further information in relation to your request to speed up my response.

I try to respond to all legitimate requests within one month. If it is likely to take longer due to the nature of your request, I will inform you.

How to Complain: In the first instance, if you have any complaints about how I have used your data, please do contact me by email at elaine.benson@protonmail.com. I will provide an acknowledgement of the initial complaint within 30 days. Any complaints will be investigated and responded to within a reasonable time period.

If you are not satisfied with my response, you can also complain to the ICO at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1113

Confidentiality

Everything you discuss with me is confidential. This confidentiality will only be broken in the following circumstances:

If you tell me that you are intending to take your life, I would want to contact additional support for you.

Issues of safeguarding in respect of children or young people

Issues of safeguarding in respect of vulnerable adults.

In cases of money laundering, terrorism or treason.

I will always try to speak to you about any breaking of confidentiality first, unless there are safeguarding issues that prevent this.

I will keep a record of your personal details to help the counselling services run smoothly. These details are kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected laptop and emails are encrypted for security. Your information is not shared with any third party without your consent.

I will keep written notes of each session; these are kept locked in a filing cabinet or password protected laptop. For security reasons I do not retain text messages for more than six weeks. If there is relevant information contained in a text message, I will add this to the written notes I keep and store as described above. Likewise, any email correspondence will be deleted after two weeks if it is not important. If necessary, I will print off a copy and keep it in a locked cabinet.

All counsellors and psychotherapists receive clinical supervision to ensure that they are working ethically and in the best interests of their clients. Therefore, I will discuss elements of my work with you with my supervisor, but will keep your identity confidential.

After counselling has ended.

Once counselling has ended any paper records will be kept for seven years from the end of our contact with each other and are then securely destroyed by shredding. Any information stored on my laptop will be deleted, including from any 'bins' deleted data is moved to.

Policy effective from June 17th 2026

Elaine Benson