



As Light as Feather Counselling

Safeguarding Policy

1. My Commitment to Your Safety

At As Light As A Feather Counselling, your safety and wellbeing are very important to me. This policy explains how I respond if I'm ever concerned that you, or someone else, may be at risk of harm. It applies to both online and in-person sessions.

As a counsellor in private practice, I work within the BACP Ethical Framework and follow UK laws that help protect adults from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

2. What Safeguarding Means

Safeguarding means being aware of signs that someone might be at risk, including emotional, physical, sexual or financial harm, neglect, or coercion. It also includes helping protect people who may not be able to keep themselves safe.

If something comes up in our sessions that makes me worried about your safety or someone else's, I may need to take action. I'll always aim to talk to you about this first, unless doing so could put you or someone else at greater risk.

3. Record-Keeping

Any safeguarding concerns are recorded factually and securely, in line with data protection and confidentiality requirements.

4. When I Might Need to Act

I may need to act if:

- You tell me something that suggests you or someone else is at risk of serious harm
- An adult at risk is being abused, neglected, or exploited
- You talk about plans to end your life or hurt someone else
- I am required to act by law (e.g. in cases of serious crime or terrorism)

In these situations, I may need to contact other professionals (like a local safeguarding team or emergency services and/or my supervisor). I'll only share what is necessary to keep people safe, and only with the right people.

5. What I'll Do If I'm Concerned

If I become concerned about your safety (or someone else's), I will:

- **Talk to you first**, if it's safe to do so
 - **Get support if needed**, by contacting the appropriate services
 - **Write down a clear, factual record** of the concern and what action I took
 - **Store this information securely and confidentially**
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5a. Who I Speak To

If I am concerned about your safety, or someone else's, I will always aim to discuss this with you first (if it's safe). I will also seek advice from my clinical supervisor and, if needed, contact relevant services such as the local safeguarding team or emergency services to make sure the right support is provided.

6. Reporting and Supervision

I receive regular clinical supervision, where I may discuss safeguarding concerns in a confidential and professional setting to ensure that I respond appropriately. If I need to take further action, I will follow the guidance of the BACP Ethical Framework and relevant safeguarding procedures.

7. Online Sessions and Safety

When we work online:

- I ask for your **location and emergency contact** before we begin
 - We use a secure video platform (such as Zoom with password and waiting room)
 - I may check in with you if I'm concerned about your safety at home or in your environment
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8. In-Person Sessions and Safety

If we meet in person:

- Sessions take place in a safe, private space
 - I will check whether there are any known risks or safety concerns
 - I have a plan in place for emergencies, such as if someone is in crisis or becomes distressed
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9. Supervision and Support

I regularly attend clinical supervision where I can discuss any safeguarding concerns in a confidential, professional setting, without sharing identifying details unless absolutely necessary.

I also update my safeguarding knowledge regularly through training and reading, so I can support you safely and responsibly.

10. Your Rights and My Responsibilities

Your privacy is very important to me. I will only share information if I believe someone is at serious risk, or if I'm legally required to.

I'll always explain what I'm doing and why, **wherever possible**.

You have the right to ask questions and to understand any decisions that affect you.

I will always share the minimum necessary information to protect safety and will explain any actions taken wherever possible.

11. Who to Contact in an Emergency

If you are in immediate danger or need urgent support, you can contact:

- **Emergency Services (UK):** 999
- **Police (non-emergency):** 101
- **Samaritans (24/7, free):** 116 123
- **NSPCC (for concerns about children):** 0808 800 5000
- **Local Safeguarding Adults Team:** Contact your local council's safeguarding team.
- search "Safeguarding Adults Team [Your Council Name]").
- **For clients outside the UK:** Please contact your local emergency services number or national helpline for urgent support in your country.

12. Reviewing This Policy

This policy is reviewed once a year or sooner if laws, ethical guidance, or practice needs change.

Safeguarding is about care and protection, not judgement. My aim is always to act with compassion and integrity to help keep you and others safe.