



As Light As A Feather Counselling

Privacy Statement for Clients

1. Introduction

This privacy statement explains how *As Light As A Feather Counselling* collects, uses, and protects your personal information. I take confidentiality and data protection seriously and comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2. Information I Collect

To provide counselling safely and effectively, I may collect and store the following information:

- Contact details and emergency contact information
- Reasons for accessing counselling
- Relevant health information that may impact the counselling process
- Information regarding disabilities or additional needs, if necessary
- Information provided through the website enquiry form (such as name, contact details, and brief enquiry details)

Appointments are logged on the service's counselling telephone using initials only.

Brief session notes are also made to monitor each client's therapeutic journey, which may include additional personal data disclosed during therapy.

3. Why I Collect This Information

This information enables me to:

- Provide counselling safely and effectively
- Maintain appropriate records of sessions
- Contact you regarding appointments or emergencies
- Fulfil legal and ethical obligations as a registered counsellor
- Understand and respond to your individual needs

4. How Your Data Is Stored and Protected

All electronic records are password-protected and stored securely.

Paper notes are kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to me.

I take all reasonable steps to ensure your information remains confidential and protected.

5. How Long Your Data Is Kept

Client records are retained for **seven years** after counselling ends, in line with BACP guidance.

After this period, all records are securely destroyed.

6. Sharing of Information

Your information is never shared with third parties unless:

- I am legally required to do so (for example, safeguarding concerns or court orders)
- You provide explicit consent for information to be shared

7. Your Rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data I hold about you
- Request corrections to inaccurate information
- Request deletion of your data (where legally permissible)
- Withdraw consent for data processing
- Complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you believe your data has been mishandled

8. Cookies and Website Analytics

This website uses essential cookies to ensure it functions correctly and may use analytics cookies to understand how visitors use the site. These cookies do not collect personal information. By continuing to use the site, you consent to the use of cookies in accordance with this policy.

9. Online Sessions

Online counselling sessions are conducted via **Zoom Pro**, which uses end-to-end encryption to protect confidentiality. Sessions are never recorded, and access is protected through waiting rooms and password-secured meeting links.

10. Consent

Before counselling begins, I will ask for your consent to hold and process your personal information.

You can withdraw this consent at any time, although certain data may need to be retained for legal or ethical reasons (for example, safeguarding or record-keeping requirements).

By contacting me through the website or engaging in counselling, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to this privacy statement.

11. Third-Party Services

To provide counselling and manage communication safely and effectively, I use a small number of trusted third-party services. Each is GDPR-compliant and processes data securely.

Online Counselling Sessions

Sessions are delivered using **Zoom Pro** with end-to-end encryption (E2EE) enabled, ensuring that all conversations remain private and secure. Sessions are never recorded, and access is protected through waiting rooms and password-secured meeting links.

If you would prefer an alternative method of communication, I'm happy to discuss options such as password-protected documents or secure messaging platforms.

Email Communication and Security

Initial communication — including requests for counselling sessions and the sending of Zoom invitations — is conducted via an **Outlook.com** email account. Only minimal personal data is used at this stage (typically a first name or initials and an email address). No sensitive or therapeutic information is shared over email.

Emails containing consent confirmations are stored securely and deleted once no longer needed.

All other client information is handled offline, printed, and securely stored in a locked safe.

While Outlook.com uses encryption in transit (TLS), clients are advised that this method does not offer full end-to-end encryption. By choosing to engage in therapy, you acknowledge and accept the limitations of email-based communication for basic administrative use.

WhatsApp Business

The service uses **WhatsApp Business** for practical and time-sensitive updates, such as appointment confirmations, changes, or cancellations. Messages are limited to essential information only and are never used for marketing purposes.

Your phone number will only be used on WhatsApp if you have provided it as a contact method. Conversations are kept to a minimum and are not stored outside the app unless necessary for record-keeping (for example, confirmation of cancellations).

WhatsApp is a third-party service provided by **Meta Platforms Inc.** While messages are end-to-end encrypted, WhatsApp may collect metadata. You can choose not to be contacted via WhatsApp by letting me know your preference at any time.

I regularly review the security and privacy practices of these services to ensure they continue to meet professional and ethical standards.

12. Contact

For any questions about this privacy statement or how your data is handled, please contact:

Nicole Robinson

As Light As A Feather Counselling

Email: aslightasafeathercounselling@outlook.com