



Privacy Policy

Your privacy is extremely important to me. You can feel confident that any personal information you share will be kept safe, used responsibly, and protected with the highest level of security. This policy explains how your data is collected, stored, used and protected from the moment you contact me through to after your counselling has ended.

I follow current UK data protection legislation, including:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR)

Counselling Information Regulations (2025)

- I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): ZB925023.

1. Who is the Data Controller?

I (Nicola Simpson, The Listening Ear) am the data controller. This means I am responsible for keeping your personal information safe and deciding how it is used.

You can contact me at: nic@thelistening-ear.co.uk

2. My Lawful Basis for Processing Your Information

The GDPR requires me to have a lawful basis for using your personal data:

When you enquire about counselling:

- I use *legitimate interests* to respond to your enquiry.

When you begin counselling or are considering it:

- I use *contract* as the lawful basis for processing your information.

Special category data (your health information):

- I process this under the lawful basis of *provision of health treatment and contract with a health professional*.

After counselling ends:

- I use *legitimate interests* to retain your records for the required period.

3. Initial Contact

When you contact me, I collect only the information needed to respond (usually your name, email and phone number).

If you decide not to proceed, your information is deleted within 24 hours unless you request earlier deletion.

4. During Counselling

Everything you share in counselling is confidential. Confidentiality may only be broken if:

- I am required by law
- There is a risk of serious harm to you or someone else
- There is a safeguarding concern involving a child, young person or adult at risk
- I need to discuss your work in supervision (anonymised)

I keep minimal personal details to help sessions run smoothly. I also keep brief session notes.

Zero-Knowledge Encryption (New Update)

All digital records — including personal details, session notes, safeguarding records and emails saved for clinical purposes — are stored using zero-knowledge encrypted software.

This means your information is encrypted in a way that only I can access, and no external provider can view or decode your data.

All devices are password-protected and regularly updated for security.

Texts and Emails

- Text messages are deleted within 24 hours unless clinically necessary.

- Emails are deleted within 24 hours unless they need to be stored securely as part of your record.

5. After Counselling Ends

Your records are kept securely for 7 years, or until a child reaches age 25, whichever is longer.

After this, they are permanently and securely destroyed.

If you would like your information deleted sooner, please let me know.

6. Your Data Protection Rights

You have the right to:

- Request a copy of the information I hold about you
- Ask me to correct inaccurate information
- Ask me to delete your information (unless I am legally required to keep it)
- Ask me to limit or stop processing your data
- Understand how long your data is stored and who it may be shared with

To request your data, please email nic@thelistening-ear.co.uk.

I will respond within 14 working days.

If you have concerns about how your data is handled, you can contact the ICO:

ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint

7. Data Security

I take data security very seriously.

- All digital information is stored using zero-knowledge encryption.
- Any paper records are kept in a locked cabinet.
- Only I have access to your information.
- No data is shared with third parties unless legally required.

8. Website Privacy

My website is hosted by GoDaddy, which collects anonymous visitor behaviour data to help improve the site.

No personal information is collected unless you complete a contact form.

Any form submissions are temporarily stored by the web host before being sent securely to me.

9. Automated Decision-Making

I do not use automated decision-making or profiling.

