



Online and Digital Therapy Policy

This policy explains how online and digital counselling is offered at The Listening Ear, and how your privacy, safety and wellbeing are protected when sessions take place through video, phone or digital communication. My aim is to make online therapy as safe, supportive and confidential as in-person work.

This policy supports my Privacy Policy, Data Protection & Security Policy, and Safeguarding Policy.

1. Purpose of Online Therapy

Online therapy allows you to access counselling when:

- travel or mobility is difficult
- health, disability or caring responsibilities limit attendance
- you prefer the comfort of your own space
- you live outside my local area

Online therapy is offered through secure, encrypted platforms to protect your confidentiality.

2. Technology and Security

To keep your information safe, I use:

Secure, Encrypted Platforms

All online sessions take place on platforms that use end-to-end encryption. This means our conversation cannot be accessed or viewed by anyone else.

Zero-Knowledge Encryption for Records

Any notes, emails saved for clinical reasons, or documents relating to your therapy are stored using zero-knowledge encrypted software, meaning:

- only I can access your data
- no external provider can decode or view your information

- your records remain protected even if a system is compromised

Device Security

- My devices are password-protected and use multi-factor authentication
- Software is regularly updated
- No client information is stored on portable devices unless encrypted

3. Your Responsibilities for Online Safety

To help keep sessions confidential, please:

- join from a private, quiet space where you won't be overheard
- use your own device rather than a shared one
- ensure your device is password-protected
- avoid public Wi-Fi where possible
- use headphones if privacy is limited

If privacy becomes difficult, we can pause or reschedule the session.

4. Communication Boundaries

To protect your confidentiality:

- Sensitive information is not shared by text, WhatsApp or social media
- Emails are used only for practical communication (e.g., booking)
- Text messages and emails are deleted within 24 hours unless clinically necessary
- Any information that needs to be kept is transferred into your encrypted record

5. Confidentiality in Online Sessions

Confidentiality in online therapy follows the same rules as in-person counselling.

It may only be broken if:

- there is a risk of serious harm
- a child or adult at risk may be experiencing significant harm
- abuse, coercive control or exploitation is disclosed
- I am legally required to share information

Whenever possible, I will explain what needs to be shared and why.

6. Safeguarding in Online Therapy

Online therapy has specific safeguarding considerations. I will:

- ask for your location at the start of therapy
- ask for an emergency contact
- follow local safeguarding procedures based on where you live
- act promptly if I believe you or someone else is at risk

If a safeguarding concern arises during an online session, I may need to contact emergency services or your local authority.

7. Technical Issues

If connection problems occur:

- I will attempt to reconnect
- If reconnection fails, I will contact you by phone or email
- We may reschedule the session if needed

You will not be charged for time lost due to technical issues.

8. Online Therapy Suitability

Online therapy may not be suitable if:

- you do not have a private space
- your internet connection is unstable
- you are in immediate crisis
- your circumstances require more intensive support

If online therapy is not appropriate, we will discuss alternatives.

9. Record Keeping

All online therapy records — including session notes, safeguarding records and emails saved for clinical reasons — are stored using zero-knowledge encryption and follow my Record-Keeping Policy.

10. Ending Online Therapy

When online therapy ends:

- your records are kept securely for the required retention period
- all digital information is stored using zero-knowledge encryption
- any temporary digital communication is deleted