



Alison Smith Counselling MBACP (Accred), Dip Couns
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Alison Smith Counselling

5 Wick Yard, Bath Road Farleigh Wick, Bradford On Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2PU

Information about my therapeutic counselling practice

This contract gives information that may be helpful to you as the referrer of a client for counselling with me. I will be making a separate agreement with the child/young person in the course of our first few sessions using age-appropriate language and explanations, ensuring the child or young person understands the role and purpose of counselling, what their goals in counselling are, as well as confidentiality and its limits.

I will also need to obtain written consent from a parent/guardian and a form is available on my web site [referrals | Alison Smith Counselling](http://alisonsmithcounselling.com/referrals) I do contract separately with the parent/guardians of the child or young person and speak with them to get a thorough history to help inform my work.

In the case of looked after children, I will need written consent from their social worker.

Counselling with me: Counselling sessions with me provide children and young people with a safe, confidential space to explore difficult feelings and, over time, think of new ways to respond to these feelings, which can help build emotional resilience, self-awareness and self esteem – improving general wellbeing.

I am passionate about offering a blended approach to counselling. We are able to be outside in the wonderful environment, engage, interact with and observe the animals here, as well as have the opportunity for time in my counselling room where I have lots of creative resources. This flexibility means that I am truly able to meet the child or young person where they are at and support their unique needs.

As well as my therapy room, we will be able to spend time in the adjoining paddocks and woodland area. Interactions with animals such as horses and sheep are likely as well as with my two dogs. Research shows that time in nature and with animals is

linked to a host of benefits, including improved mental and physical well-being, improved attention, lower stress and better mood. Clients experience connections with the environment, the animals and with me as an attuned adult.

As well as risk assessing all activities and the site, I will be dynamically risk assessing activities and interactions, involving the client in this process – an important part of the experiential nature of our sessions together. For some clients, we may venture further afield on the public footpaths nearby (all walks are risk assessed and I will seek permission from the parent/carer for this).

A full risk assessment can be viewed on my web site. [Policies \(alisonsmithcounselling.com\)](https://alisonsmithcounselling.com)

Sessions: Sessions are typically one or two hours long. This is longer than a typical counselling session as I find that having access to both indoors and outdoors spaces allows us more scope and we can pace sessions to meet the child's needs. I also offer longer sessions for some children and young people (where there is an established relationship) and this will be discussed at referral, or as sessions progress if appropriate. Sessions will normally be held at the same time each week and this will be the client's time while they come to counselling with me.

Holiday breaks: Over the year 2024-2025, **I will be delivering sessions across 38 weeks. This includes 36 during term time and two additional weeks in the summer holidays.** I find that having some contact and support over the long summer break can be especially helpful and beneficial for some children and young people. Summer sessions will be discussed on an individual basis as I also appreciate that families take holiday over that time too.

Term dates:

9 September – 18 October (7 weeks) – Term 1

4 November – 13 December (6 weeks) – Term 2

6 January – 14 February (6 Weeks) – Term 3

24 February – 28 March (5 Weeks) – Term 4

21 April – 23 May (5 Weeks) – Term 5

2 June – 17 July (7 Weeks) – Term 6

11- 15 August (1 Week) - Falls within Summer Holiday

26-29 August(1 Week) - Falls within Summer Holiday

Length of sessions and endings: Sessions can be fixed length (a minimum of two terms) or open ended and endings need to be **appropriately planned** and mutually agreed. Generally we will agree together when we feel the time is right to end our sessions and **this would usually involve allowing an appropriate number of sessions to explore and manage the ending together**. For children and young people, planning an ending and working towards it is extremely important and I would look to work with you and with the child and their family to ensure a positive ending wherever possible.

Payment of sessions: Sessions cost **£60 per hour**. Sessions will be invoiced in advance of the term. Payments that are 28 days late or more may incur a 5 per cent charge. If a child isn't able to come for their session, the session will not be refunded. In the event that I have to cancel a session, I will let you know as soon as possible and try to offer an alternative slot if possible and if this cannot be found then a refund will be given. In the event that a session has to be cancelled due to severe weather (such as snow), sessions will not be refunded and any decision to close for the day will be to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

Reports: Counselling is a confidential space and I do not routinely write reports about sessions. However, for some children and young people, sharing observations through a report may be helpful and I will discuss this at the point of referral or as the need arises. I do work systemically where appropriate to ensure best outcomes for children and young people.

I can also contribute to EHCPs where appropriate and can attend meetings. In these instances, I would always be respecting the child or young person's right for confidentiality.

Other fees: When I write a professional report or EHCP annual review contribution, I will charge for this at £60 per hour, or part of. Equally, for the attendance of meetings. Please let me know who will be paying this fee if and when needed.

Contact with the child or young person's primary care giver(s): Contact with the family is often critical to ensuring the success of counselling and I always carry out an initial assessment with the child or young person's primary care giver(s) to get background information. It may also be the case that I arrange additional session(s) with the family/care giver as part of the therapy and this may be charged for additionally.

Holding a space for a child while funding is secured: If funding is being applied for and I am asked to hold a space for a child, I will do so for two weeks, after which time a deposit will be asked for to secure the slot.

Confidentiality: In counselling, my working relationship is confidential. As a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), I am bound by and adhere to the BACP Ethical Framework. There may be times when I have to break confidentiality such as when there is a clear indication of probable physical danger to the client or to others. In addition the law requires disclosure in the case of terrorism, the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults or money laundering.

When working with children and young people, it is essential to work in a systemic way to ensure the best outcomes for the child and I always endeavour to carefully balance the child's right to privacy and confidentiality (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 16) with my duty to safeguard anyone who is at risk of serious harm (HM Government's Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018). The welfare and safety of the child or young person is always a priority.

I, Alison Smith, hold the post of Designated Safeguarding Lead at Alison Smith Counselling. You can view my separate safeguarding on my web site . [Policies \(alisonsmithcounselling.com\)](https://alisonsmithcounselling.com)

Supervision: I attend regular supervision to ensure good, safe and ethical practice is maintained in all my counselling work. All communication between me and my supervisor concerning my clients is done in the client's best interests.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): The new GDP Regulations were introduced on May 25th, 2018 and must be complied with by any business that handles personal data. This means that as my client you have the right to know how and why your information is being used by me and I must obtain your explicit consent to hold your personal details in my files 'in any form', both online and paper.

How I collect and store a client's information: In the course of my work as a Counsellor I hold the name, address and contact details (email and telephone number(s)) that you give me in our initial contact communication and the subsequent assessment made during my first session with the client. In addition to the data that you provide me with I keep brief handwritten notes that record the themes of our sessions to assist me in my work. All handwritten (manual) client information is held in locked cabinets and all identifying information is held separately to client notes which are anonymised. Invoices are anonymised save for a first name and accessible electronically only with a passcode. All interaction by email or text is of a general nature and no phone numbers held in my counselling practice phone have a name attached to them.

A client's rights and access to information: Clients have the right to ask to see any information that I hold about you. Unless I am legally prevented from doing so I will provide this information to you within a month of your request.

A client also have the right to ask me to change any information that I hold that is incorrect and to ask me to delete any information that I hold about you. I will do this except for any information I am bound to hold for legal reasons such as tax purposes. I am happy to discuss any of these issues in a session should you wish to. My data protection policy can be viewed on request. I am also registered with the Information Commissioner's Office under the trading name of Alison Smith Counselling and my **Security number is** : CSN0791995. **My UKPRN** is: 10095496

My full Privacy Policy/GDPR can be viewed on my web site.

Complaints: If you have a complaint, I would ask that you raise it with me first so we can discuss it. I will respond in writing/email within ten working days. I am a member of the BACP which has its own complaints procedure. It can be contacted at www.bacp.co.uk

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 sets out clear guidance about what should happen if an allegation of abuse is made against a person who works with children.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) can be contacted via the Quality Assurance and Review Service, Clarence House, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH
Tel: (01793) 463854. Email: LADO@swindon.gov.uk

Medical Issues/Emergencies: I will collect information about any medical issues or allergies separately and this is important for me to know. I am Paediatric First Aid trained and I have a separate Health and Safety policy which can be viewed on my web site. [Policies \(alisonsmithcounselling.com\)](http://alisonsmithcounselling.com)

Referring on: On occasion, I may need to refer on to other agencies or health care professionals but this would only ever be done with your consent and full consultation.

With best wishes, *Alison*

My qualifications:

Accredited Member - British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

Post Qualifying Diploma in Counselling Children and Young People (Level 7)

Certificate in Complex Trauma Recovery (Betsy de Thierry)

Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (CPCAB)

Level 3 Safeguarding Children - 2 September 2023

Level 3 Safeguarding Adults – 3 September 2023

Prevent refresh training – 4 September 2023

Alison Smith Counselling

Paediatric First Aid Full Certificate – 2 July 2022

EAQ Level 3 Certificate Equine Assisted Learning Facilitation

Safeguarding and Child Protection in Private Practice and Lone Working – October 2022

Other qualifications:

Master of Arts: University of Nottingham

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) 2:1 : Loughborough University

Associate London College of Music and Drama (ALCM)

London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (Gold Medal)

I have read the information about Alison Smith Counselling and been given a copy for my personal records:

.....Date.....

Referrer