

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

I am committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all clients — including children, young people, adults, couples, and adults at risk — who seek my counselling services. This safeguarding policy outlines my commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all individuals who access my services, with particular attention to children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

1. Policy Statement

I recognise my responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all clients who engage my services, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

I am committed to creating an environment where clients feel safe, respected, and supported throughout their engagement with my counselling service.

My safeguarding procedures aim to identify and respond to concerns about the safety and wellbeing of clients promptly and appropriately.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Protect children and young people who receive counselling from me from harm, including the children of adults who use my services.
- Protect adults — particularly those who are vulnerable — who receive counselling from me from harm.
- Provide all clients with the overarching principles that guide my approach to safeguarding and protection.
- Ensure safe practice across adult therapy, child therapy, couples therapy, and online therapy.



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2. Legal and Ethical Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Professional ethical codes (BACP)

Safeguarding responsibilities apply equally to in-person and online therapy.

3. Scope of Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding applies to:

- Children and young people under 18
- Adults
- Adults at risk
- Couples attending therapy
- Clients seen online, including those in different regions
- Third parties mentioned during therapy who may be at risk

4. Responsibilities

4.1 My Duties

I have a duty to:

- Prioritise the safety and welfare of clients at all times.
- Be vigilant for signs of abuse, neglect, coercive control, or exploitation.
- Report any concerns following my reporting procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality in line with professional ethics, except where disclosure is necessary to protect a client or another person from significant harm.



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4.2 My Responsibilities

I am responsible for:

- Attending safeguarding training and keeping my knowledge up to date.
- Adhering to safeguarding guidelines and reporting concerns promptly.
- Reviewing and updating this safeguarding policy regularly to reflect best practice and legislative changes.
- Seeking supervision and consultation when safeguarding concerns arise.

5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential to the counselling process. However, it may be breached if:

- A client is at risk of serious harm.
- A child or adult at risk is in danger.
- A crime has been committed or is likely to be committed.
- Required by law or court order.

Clients are informed of the limits of confidentiality at the outset of therapy. Additional guidance may be sought when working with clients under 18.

6. Risk Assessment

Before commencing counselling, I assess clients for potential safeguarding risks, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

I will:

- Review clients' circumstances regularly.
- Reassess risk if new information emerges.
- Consider risks related to domestic abuse, coercive control, self-harm, suicidal ideation, mental capacity, or environmental safety (including online settings).

7. Safeguarding Procedures

7.1 Recognising Concerns

Concerns may arise through:



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- Direct disclosure
- Observed behaviour
- Information shared by a partner in couples therapy
- Observations during online sessions (e.g., unsafe environment, third-party presence)
- Inconsistencies in a child's account

7.2 Responding

When a concern arises, I will:

- Listen calmly and without judgement
- Avoid leading questions
- Not promise absolute confidentiality
- Clarify only what is necessary

7.3 Recording

I will document:

- What was said (verbatim where possible)
- Observations
- Risk assessment
- Actions taken
- Rationale for decisions

Records are stored securely in line with GDPR.

7.4 Consulting

I will discuss concerns with my clinical supervisor at the earliest opportunity.

7.5 Reporting Procedures

If I believe a child or young person is at risk of harm, I will make a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the relevant local authority.

Where possible, and where it does not increase risk, this will be done with the knowledge of the child or young person.



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If I believe a client or another adult, particularly one that is deemed vulnerable is at risk of harm, I may also:

- Contact social services
- Contact the police in cases of immediate danger
- Contact your GP
- Notify my professional body (BACP) where appropriate

All safeguarding concerns, actions, and outcomes will be documented confidentially.

8. Safeguarding in Online Therapy

I will:

- Confirm the client's physical location at the start of therapy and at each session.
- Obtain emergency contact details.
- Ensure clients are in a private, safe environment.
- Be alert to signs of coercive control, domestic abuse, or third-party interference.
- Use secure, encrypted platforms and store digital records safely.

9. Safeguarding When Working With Children and Young People

9.1 My Beliefs

I believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- I have a responsibility to promote their welfare and keep them safe.

9.2 My Recognition

I recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount.
- Partnership with parents, carers, and agencies may be necessary.
- All children have an equal right to protection.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable due to past trauma, communication needs, or dependency.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep vulnerable children safe.



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9.3 My Practice

I will seek to keep children safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection best practice.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation.
- Ensuring effective complaints procedures are in place.
- Following local safeguarding procedures and referring concerns promptly.

10. Safeguarding in Couples Therapy

I recognise that couples therapy may reveal:

- Domestic abuse
- Coercive control
- Power imbalances
- Risks to one or both partners

If abuse is suspected:

- Joint sessions may be paused or ended.
- Individual support or signposting may be offered.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Confidentiality in couples work is clarified at the outset. If one partner discloses risk privately, I may need to act even if they request secrecy.

11. Safeguarding in Adult Therapy

I remain alert to:

- Suicidal ideation
- Self-harm
- Domestic abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Mental capacity concerns



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- Substance misuse

Where capacity is impaired, safeguarding duties increase.

12. Training and Support

I will:

- Attend safeguarding training regularly.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of legislation and best practice.
- Engage in ongoing clinical supervision.
- Ensure competence in online safeguarding.

13. Review and Monitoring

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with legislation and best practice.

Any safeguarding incidents or near misses will be monitored and used to improve procedures.

14. Conclusion

I am committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding to protect the welfare of all clients who engage with my services. This policy will be communicated to clients, and I welcome feedback to help continually improve my safeguarding practices.



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