

Safeguarding Policy - The Healing Space

1. Purpose and Scope

The Healing Space is owned and operated by Gemma Brown (Psychotherapist, sole practitioner). I am committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who access my services.

I provide 1:1 counselling in-person (age 7+), online, and through Walk and Talk therapy (age 12+). This policy sets out my safeguarding responsibilities, the legal framework I work within, and the procedures I follow to protect clients from harm.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following UK legislation and statutory guidance:

- *Children Act 1989 and 2004*
 - *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) - statutory guidance for all practitioners
 - *Care Act 2014* - safeguarding duties for adults at risk
 - *Children and Social Work Act 2017* - emphasising the importance of children's voices in safeguarding decisions
 - *Gillick v West Norfolk & Wisbech Area Health Authority (1985)* - establishing that children under 16 may consent to treatment, including counselling, if they have sufficient understanding of what is proposed
 - *Fraser Guidelines* - applied when assessing a young person's capacity to consent
 - *UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018* - governing the handling and sharing of personal data
 - Local safeguarding procedures set out by Warrington Borough Council (Warrington Safeguarding Partnership)
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3. Supporting Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
 - Complaints Procedure
 - Social Media and Online Communication Policy
 - Lone Working Policy
 - Emergency Procedures
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4. Principles and Beliefs

- The welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults is paramount.
 - All individuals have the right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
 - Safeguarding is a shared responsibility; I will work in partnership with clients, parents/carers (where appropriate), and other agencies.
 - All individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection.
 - Some individuals may be more vulnerable due to their circumstances and therefore require additional safeguards.
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5. My Commitment as a Sole Practitioner

I will:

- Place the wellbeing of clients at the centre of my practice.
- Explain confidentiality and safeguarding procedures clearly at the outset of therapy.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns or disclosures.

- Assess Gillick competence for clients under 16 on an ongoing basis. Where a young person demonstrates sufficient understanding of therapy and its implications, they may provide their own consent to engage.
 - Apply the Fraser Guidelines when appropriate, ensuring the young person's safety and best interests remain central.
 - Involve parents/carers where safe and appropriate, while respecting the young person's right to confidential support.
 - Consult my clinical supervisor on safeguarding matters where appropriate, and seek advice directly from Warrington Borough Council (Warrington Safeguarding Partnership) or statutory services if risk is identified.
 - Maintain clear professional boundaries at all times.
 - Keep accurate, factual, and secure records in line with *UK GDPR* and the *Data Protection Act 2018*.
 - Access regular safeguarding training and professional development.
 - Review and update this policy annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.
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6. Procedures

Responding to a Disclosure or Concern

- Listen carefully, calmly, and without judgment.
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking.
- Do not promise absolute confidentiality - explain that information may need to be shared if there is risk of harm.
- Record the disclosure factually (date, time, exact words used, your observations).
- Discuss in supervision if appropriate, unless an immediate referral is required.
- Where there is risk of significant harm, contact Warrington Borough Council Children's Social Care/Adult Social Care or the police without delay.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information disclosed in therapy is treated as confidential except when:

- There is risk of harm to self or others.
- There is disclosure of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult.
- There is a legal requirement to disclose information.

Any sharing of information will be proportionate, relevant, and in line with *UK GDPR*, the *Data Protection Act 2018*, and BACP/NCPS ethical frameworks.

Lone Working

- A lone working risk assessment will be completed for all forms of therapy, including Walk and Talk sessions and in-office practice.
 - For Walk and Talk sessions, the route will be agreed in advance, a charged mobile phone will be carried, and a check-in/out system will be used.
 - Safety procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain robust.
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7. Contact Information

- **Gemma Brown, Psychotherapist (Owner & Sole Practitioner)**
 - Email: gemma@thehealingspacetherapy.co.uk
 - Phone: 07359 459004
- **Warrington Borough Council – Safeguarding Contacts**
 - Warrington Safeguarding Partnership:
safeguardingpartnerships@warrington.gov.uk
 - Children's Social Care Duty Team: 01925 443400
 - Adult Social Care: 01925 444239
- **Police (Emergency): 999 | Non-Emergency: 101**

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, local authority guidance, or professional standards.