



# Client Charter

*For all Managers, Staff, Volunteers and organisations working with us.*

# Client Charter

## Document Information

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# 1 Contents

Document Information .....	2
2 Client Charter – Rights & Responsibilities .....	4
3 Client Contract .....	5
4 Privacy notice for clients - how we use your personal information .....	6
4.1 DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES .....	6
4.2 TYPES OF DATA HELD .....	7
4.3 COLLECTING YOUR DATA .....	7
4.4 LAWFUL BASIS FOR PROCESSING .....	7
4.5 FAILURE TO PROVIDE DATA.....	8
4.6 WHO WE SHARE YOUR DATA WITH.....	8
4.7 PROTECTING YOUR DATA.....	9
4.8 RETENTION PERIODS .....	10
4.9 AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING.....	10
4.10 YOUR RIGHTS .....	10
4.11 CONSENT .....	11
4.12 MAKING A COMPLAINT.....	11
4.13 DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE.....	11

## 2 Client Charter – Rights & Responsibilities

As a client of Sunderland Counselling Service, you have the right to:

- Be treated at all times with respect.
- Be treated without discrimination for any reason.
- Be able to accept or refuse our services.
- Be informed of any likely waiting times for our services.
- Be treated with professional skill and consideration at all times.
- Privacy for all your appointments.
- Expect all aspects of your counselling to be treated with confidentiality and to have our confidentiality policy fully explained to you by your counsellor. Confidentiality may be breached where we have reason for thinking that there is a risk of serious harm either to you or to another person, including children. You can ask for a copy of our confidentiality policy if you wish.
- Ask to see any notes made about you by our staff.
- Make a complaint and have it investigated thoroughly, impartially and quickly, and be informed of the result. If you need, you can ask someone to support you with this, such as a friend or family member.
- Give feedback on the services you have received. We will ask you to evaluate our services.
- Interpretation services if necessary.

In addition, we expect certain things of our clients:

- Not to attend when under the influence of drugs and / or alcohol. In the interests of safety, any client attending when intoxicated will be asked to leave the premises.
- Not to behave in an aggressive or threatening manner to any member of our staff. If you do so, you will be asked to leave the premises.
- To let us know at least 24 hours in advance if you want to cancel an appointment.
- Please be aware that many of our counsellors are volunteers and must travel to your appointment. If you do not attend an appointment and do not contact us in advance we will not offer you further appointments as these are very costly to the organisation and the time could be used for another person.

- Not to attend therapy with two services at the same time.

### 3 Client Contract

The Client Contract is designed to help clients of SCS understand what is offered to them, and what their responsibilities are. It will explain how we store and use any information we hold about our clients, which is also explained in the next section of this Client Charter. Clients will be asked to confirm their understanding and acceptance of these terms by signing the contract. The Contract will include details of:

- The nature of the service offered to the client;
- Confidentiality and its limits, including how information is stored by SCS and under what circumstances elements of the client's information may be shared internally or externally e.g. counsellor supervision, safeguarding, the use of data for reporting and funding purposes;
- Attendance and the expectations SCS has of the client regarding cancellations;
- Appropriate behaviour by the client;
- When the client may be discharged;
- Complaints procedure;
- Contact information.

## 4 Privacy notice for clients - how we use your personal information

We want to offer the best possible service to our clients. To do this, we have to assess our effectiveness and continually improve our service, which means we need to collect and analyse data about our clients, their treatments and outcomes achieved. We also need to collect information about you to enable us to provide you with a suitable and safe service.

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we have implemented this privacy notice to inform you, our client, of the types of data we process about you. We also include within this notice the reasons for processing your data, the lawful basis that permits us to process it, how long we keep your data for and your rights regarding your data.

### 4.1 DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

Under GDPR, all personal data obtained and held by us must be processed according to a set of core principles. In accordance with these principles, we will ensure that:

- a) processing is fair, lawful and transparent;
- b) data is collected for specific, explicit, and legitimate purposes;
- c) data collected is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of processing;
- d) data is kept accurate and up to date; data which is found to be inaccurate will be rectified or erased without delay;
- e) data is not kept for longer than is necessary for its given purpose;
- f) data is processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage by using appropriate technical or organisational measures;
- g) we comply with the relevant GDPR procedures for international transferring of personal data.

## 4.2 TYPES OF DATA HELD

We keep several categories of personal data on our clients in order to provide you with safe and effective services. We hold the data within our computer system, which is known as IAPTus.

Specifically, we hold the following types of data:

- a) Personal details such as your name, date of birth, address, telephone numbers, NHS number, next of kin / emergency contact details.
- b) Sensitive personal data – your gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, preferred language and language support needs, sexuality, relationship status, long term conditions, disability, occupation, military details, registered GP practice.
- c) Our records contain referral / treatment data – including dates of referral / appointments / discharge, referral reasons, presenting problems, diagnosis and problem descriptor, medication, mental health status and history, clinical contacts, attendance data, outcomes scores, risk assessment.
- d) Our records contain detailed case notes / records.

## 4.3 COLLECTING YOUR DATA

We ask you to provide much of this data directly to us during the process of making and receiving a referral for you and during the course of the services that you receive from us.

We hold this data within our computer system, which is known as IAPTus.

## 4.4 LAWFUL BASIS FOR PROCESSING

The law on data protection allows us to process your data for certain reasons only. In the main, we process your data:

- a) Because we have asked you for your explicit consent; we will ask you for your verbal consent when we speak to you for the first time, for example by

telephone; we will then ask you for your written consent at your first face to face appointment with us.

- b) The processing is necessary to protect your vital interests and to allow us to provide you with a safe and effective service.
- c) The processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.

#### 4.5 FAILURE TO PROVIDE DATA

You have the right to withhold your data from us but your failure to provide us with data may mean that we are unable to provide you with an adequate service.

#### 4.6 WHO WE SHARE YOUR DATA WITH

##### **We use information to improve how we help you:**

We collect information about you and the service you receive, including assessments and your answers to questionnaires. This enables your progress to be monitored and future care planned.

Your counsellor may also share information about you, on an anonymous basis, with their line manager or supervisor to make sure they are providing you with the best possible service.

Information may be shared with other health professionals involved in your care, so that you get the best possible care. If you would like to see the information collected about you or find out more about how the information is stored and used please speak with your counsellor.

##### **Some information is reported to our commissioners and funders locally and nationally:**

As many of our services are commissioned by the NHS and other funders, some of the information collected is reported to our commissioners locally and nationally to give a picture of the services we deliver and to check that quality standards are met.

No information that could reveal a client's identity is used in these reports. They only show summary numbers of, for instance, clients accessing different services. It is impossible to identify any person seen by any service from them. Security of client information is very important to us.



### **The information collected is used to check that:**

- Services are available to those who need them most.
- Appropriate and effective therapy is provided so that clients achieve positive outcomes.
- The numbers of referrals received, time taken to access our services, the types and outcomes of therapy.
- By law the NHS has to monitor personal characteristics and check everyone has equal access to services and is not discriminated against in any way.

### **Do they need my information?**

Reports offer the most benefit when they use information from as many people as possible, because this creates the most accurate picture of services. If, however, you do not want your information included, please tell your counsellor. You and they will make sure your information is not used. This will not affect your therapy in any way.

### **For clients within our GP service only:**

Within this service, we send data about our clients to NHS Digital for the same reasons as described above. This information does not include your name, but it does include your NHS number. It is securely sent and then anonymised once received by NHS Digital.

We will ask for your specific verbal consent for this to happen when we speak to you for the first time, for example by telephone; we will then ask you for your written consent at your first face to face appointment with us.

We do not share your data with bodies outside of the European Economic Area.

## **4.7 PROTECTING YOUR DATA**

We are aware of the requirement to ensure your data is protected against accidental loss or disclosure, destruction and abuse and we take this very seriously. We have implemented rigorous processes to guard against any such instances, including physical and technical controls and the procedures we have in place. If you would like more information about any of these procedures, please ask your counsellor.

## **How do we keep your information safe?**

We store all information safely and securely and send anonymised data to commissioners and funders. All data collected is subject to strict rules of confidentiality and to legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulations, the Health and Social Care Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

### **4.8 RETENTION PERIODS**

We only keep your data for as long as we need it, which will be for the duration of your counselling or therapy with us and a period of seven years following the end of your therapy.

### **4.9 AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING**

Automated decision-making means making decisions about you using no human involvement e.g. using computerised filtering equipment. No decision will be made about you solely on the basis of automated decision making (where a decision is taken about you using an electronic system without human involvement).

### **4.10 YOUR RIGHTS**

You have the following rights in relation to the personal data we hold on you:

- the right to be informed about the data we hold on you and what we do with it;
- the right of access to the data we hold on you; if you want to exercise this right please ask your counsellor about our policy on Subject Access Requests;
- the right for any inaccuracies in the data we hold on you, however they come to light, to be corrected; this is known as 'rectification';
- the right to have data deleted in certain circumstances; this is known as 'erasure';
- the right to restrict the processing of the data;
- the right to transfer the data we hold on you to another party; this is known as 'portability';
- the right to object to the inclusion of any information;
- the right to regulate any automated decision-making and profiling of personal data.

#### 4.11 CONSENT

We will ask you for your verbal consent when we speak to you for the first time, for example by telephone; we will then ask you for your written consent at your first face to face appointment with us.

Where you have provided consent to our use of your data, you also have the right to withdraw that consent at any time. This means that we will stop processing your data. However, this may mean that we are unable to provide you with an adequate service.

#### 4.12 MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you think your data rights have been breached, you are able to raise a complaint with the Information Commissioner (ICO).

You can contact the ICO at:

**Information Commissioner's Office,**

**Wycliffe House,**

**Water Lane,**

**Wilmslow,**

**Cheshire**

**SK9 5AF**

Or by telephone on **0303 123 1113** (local rate) or **01625 545 745**.

#### 4.13 DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE

Our appointed compliance officer in respect of our data protection activities is:

**Toby Sweet, Chief Executive**

[toby@sunderlandcounselling.org.uk](mailto:toby@sunderlandcounselling.org.uk)