

Data Protection, Confidentiality and Record-Keeping Policy

The Data Protection Act 1998 mandates that we inform you of our policy and clarify the reasons for maintaining information about you at New Road Psychotherapy.

Who we are:

New Road Psychotherapy, owned by Rory Singer, is a Limited Company (On Top Of The Mountain Ltd).

We employ therapists on a sessional (contractor) basis to offer therapy. New Road Psychotherapy stores all records about this work at 8 The Drive, Hove, BN3 3JT, or in secure online cloud storage.

What information do we store?

- During our referral process, we may collect the following information about you:
- Full names of clients, and in the case of young people, parents, carers, and other significant family members.
- Date of birth.
- Address, telephone numbers, and email addresses.
- GP and, in the case of young people, school contact details.
- Reasons for seeking counselling or therapy.
- Family history.
- Current life, social interactions, and relevant medical information.
- Support networks, strengths, and interests.
- We also store brief records of therapy sessions and review meetings, including dates, times, and a brief overview of content.

Why do we store this information?

The General Data Protection Regulations define specific legal bases for storing information. Several of these apply to the information we store about our clients and their families:

- We ask clients and/or parents to consent to us storing and using this information.
- We only store the information necessary to provide the therapy requested.
- Sometimes, we must use the information collected to protect vulnerable children and young people (Safeguarding).

How information is stored and used

- New Road Psychotherapy keeps records of our work to aid therapists and ensure the quality and effectiveness of our services.
- We collect relevant information at the onset of therapy, and your therapist will maintain a brief written record of each session and copies of any relevant correspondence.

- After therapy concludes, we may destroy records of individual therapy sessions but will retain records of review meetings and any other reports or summaries.
- Records of work are digitally stored in password-protected, cloud-based storage. These records are limited to your therapist, Centre Manager, and Clinical Managers at New Road Psychotherapy.
- If you engage with multiple therapists at New Road Psychotherapy, your records will be consolidated into one folder accessible to the therapists working with you.
- We securely dispose of all records seven years after your therapy ends or seven years after your 18th birthday, whichever is later. When a therapist leaves New Road Psychotherapy, they can no longer access your records.
- Unless otherwise instructed, your contact details may be used to correspond with you regarding your therapy.
- Our email provider and yours will process email communication and email addresses may also be stored in our bookkeeping software, if necessary, for invoicing purposes.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is paramount at New Road Psychotherapy, and information about our work is shared within our team for management and clinical peer supervision purposes.
- We refrain from disclosing therapy details to external parties unless explicitly requested by the client or with the client's consent.
- Clients have the freedom to share their therapy experiences with whomever they choose.
- All therapists partake in professional clinical supervision, which remains confidential.
- In safeguarding situations, information may be disclosed without a client's consent, for example, when a therapist is concerned about serious risk to a child, young person, or others.
- When information pertains to acts or potential acts of terrorism or money laundering, we are legally obligated to report it.
- If a court mandates information disclosure.
- Whenever possible, we consult with clients before disclosing information, informing them of the details to be shared and with whom. If the client is under 18, the therapist discusses the situation with parents/carers before sharing information, provided it is safe.
- If information must be shared without consent, therapists consult with New Road Psychotherapy managers before acting unless immediate action is necessary. A record of shared information and the reasons for breaching confidentiality is documented.

Access to records

Clients have the right to access records maintained about them. If you wish to do so, please approach your therapist, who will clarify any unclear entries. Clients may also request corrections to any inaccurate information.

Access may be denied in two circumstances:

- Where the counsellor believes disclosure could be harmful.
- Where information has been supplied confidentially by another party. (Consent must typically be obtained before sharing such information.)

It is generally understood that therapy is most effective when children and young people of any age expect privacy. Thus, before commencing therapy, we agree with parents/carers that therapy session notes will remain confidential.

Per the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we act in the best interest of the child or young person when deciding what information to share with parents and carers. Sharing therapy session details is usually deemed against the child's best interest. However, if access to your child's information is required, we are open to discussing the most helpful information to share. Parents have the right to request access to information about them, such as records of meetings where they were present.

Monitoring and evaluation

We evaluate all our work to ensure effectiveness, facilitate therapists' professional growth, and plan service development. We minimise client involvement in evaluation processes, instead adopting a holistic, heuristic system. Therapists may record clients' comments regarding their therapy experiences and effects, storing and analysing this information confidentially within New Road Psychotherapy, ensuring individual client anonymity in published materials.

Clients' written and artwork

We provide secure storage for art and craft work produced during face-to-face therapy sessions. After the therapy, clients can take their work home or have it securely disposed of by us.

In cases where contact with a client is lost before the planned therapy conclusion, we retain artwork for up to three months, during which clients can arrange collection. After three months, any uncollected work is securely disposed of.

Conclusion

At New Road Psychotherapy, we are dedicated to creating a just and equitable society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that this requires ongoing commitment, effort, and steadfast resolve to be an actively inclusive organisation.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please email the centre manager at admin@newroadpsychotherapy.com.

Review and Revision: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

Effective Date: 4 June 2024