

New Road Psychotherapy

Working with Children and Young People Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how New Road Psychotherapy provides safe, ethical and legally compliant therapy to children and young people under the age of 18. It applies to all therapists, trainees, supervisors and staff working on behalf of the practice.

This policy applies only to children and young people who have been referred to and allocated through New Road Psychotherapy. Where a therapist works with children or young people through their own independent practice, outside of referrals made by New Road Psychotherapy, those clients remain the responsibility of the individual therapist and are governed by the therapist's own policies, procedures, insurance and professional obligations.

Our work is guided by the principle that the welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.

2. Content

Before therapy begins, practitioners must establish who holds parental responsibility (PR) and record this in the client's file.

- **Children under 16:** In most cases, consent from a parent or person with parental responsibility is required before therapy begins. One parent with parental responsibility is usually sufficient unless there is a court order, safeguarding concerns, or a known disagreement between those with parental responsibility. Where appropriate, practitioners should seek consent from both parents, particularly in high-conflict situations.
- **Gillick Competence:** A child under 16 who demonstrates sufficient maturity and understanding of the nature and purpose of therapy may be considered Gillick competent and may consent to therapy independently. This assessment should be documented and discussed in clinical supervision where appropriate.
- **Young people aged 16–17:** Under the Family Law Reform Act 1969, young people aged 16 and 17 are generally able to consent to their own therapeutic treatment. Practitioners should encourage the involvement of parents or trusted adults where appropriate while respecting the young person's autonomy.

Consent is an ongoing process and should be reviewed if circumstances change.

3. Confidentiality

Children and young people are entitled to confidentiality appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

At the beginning of therapy, practitioners will explain confidentiality and its limits to both the young person and their parent or carer in an age-appropriate way.

Information shared in therapy will remain confidential unless:

- there is concern that the child or another person is at risk of significant harm;
- disclosure is required by law or court order; or
- information is shared within professional supervision as part of safe clinical practice.

Parents will not routinely receive detailed accounts of therapy sessions. General updates may be provided where appropriate and in the child's best interests.

4. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the safety and welfare of the child always takes priority.

All practitioners must:

- follow the Practice Safeguarding Policy;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- contact emergency services where a child is at immediate risk;
- maintain appropriate safeguarding training and attend regular supervision.

Where concerns arise about abuse, neglect, exploitation, self-harm, suicide risk, radicalisation or any other significant welfare issue, practitioners will follow statutory safeguarding guidance and local procedures.

5. Clinical Practice

Practitioners working with children and young people must:

- work within the limits of their competence and training;
- maintain clear professional boundaries;
- complete an initial assessment, including consideration of risk;
- review risk throughout therapy;
- attend regular clinical supervision;
- keep accurate, timely and secure clinical records.

6. Record Keeping

All records relating to children and young people are stored securely in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Records will normally be retained until the young person's **25th birthday**, or longer where safeguarding, legal or regulatory requirements apply.

7. Professional Standards

Practitioners working with children and young people must:

- hold appropriate qualifications or be working towards a recognised professional qualification;
- hold an Enhanced DBS certificate where required;
- complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role;
- engage in continuing professional development and regular supervision.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, safeguarding guidance or professional standards change.

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Family Law Reform Act 1969
- Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech AHA (1985)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- BACP Ethical Framework
- UKCP Code of Ethics

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

Review and Revision: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Effective Date: July 2026