**Privacy Notice**

At Alison McLauchlan Counselling and Psychotherapy I am committed to ensuring that your personal information is protected and you understand how it is used. This Privacy Notice explains what personal information I collect, why I collect it, how I use it, the controls you have over your personal information and the procedures that I have in place to protect your personal data.

I take my responsibility for the personal data I collect about you seriously, and I aim to be transparent about how I use, handle, and to whom I disclose, such information**. Please read this Privacy Notice carefully to understand how I manage your personal data.** so that you are aware of how and why I am using the personal information and understand your rights in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR 2018).**

I will discuss GDPR and our counselling contract in our first session which we will sign to indicate our agreement should we choose to work together.

**Principles of Data Protection**

When using the term “personal data” or “personal information” in this Privacy Notice, I mean information (including opinions) that relates to you and from which you could be identified, either directly or in combination with other information which I may have in my possession.

I will comply with data protection law and principles in respect to your personal data, which means that your personal data will be:

* Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way.
* Collected only for lawful purposes that we have clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes.
* Relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes.
* Accurate and kept up to date.
* Kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about.
* Kept securely and protected.

**Sources of Personal Data**

I collect personal data about you from a variety of sources, as follows:

* The personal data is provided to me by you (e.g. when you enquire about therapy, completion of an intake form and includies additional communications via email, telephone or Teams/zoom).
* The personal data is collected in the normal course of my relationship with you
* The personal data has been made public by you (e.g. contacting me via a social media platform).
* The personal data is collected when you visit my website or use any features or resources available on or through the Website, some of which may be personal data.
* The personal data may be created by me, such as records of your communications with me or reports.

**Personal Data Collected**

The following is a summary of the types of personal data I collect:

* **Personal and contact details:** title, full name, age, address, telephone numbers, email address.
* **Special Category data:** medical information relevant to counselling, counselling history, gender, ethnicity, emergency contact, GP contact details

**Purposes and Use of Personal Data**

The main purposes for using your personal information:-

* to support and progress your enquiry for counselling and psychotherapy services provided by myself
* to facilitate the provision of the requested counselling and psychotherapy services as specified in the Contract

I use information held about you in the following ways:-

* to assess your enquiry to determine my ability to satisfy such enquiry.
* to contact you to arrange a meeting or to discuss/clarify some elements of your enquiry.
* to communicate with you during the corse of the provision of Counselling and Psychotherapy Services specified in the Contract.
* Written notes are kept by myself either on papter or computer records for my consultations with you. This is to facilitate the provision of psychotherapy and counselling services and personal development
* Your personal information may also be used for statistical information collection and sharing. No personal information will be divulged that could potentially identify you.
* Where the personal data is processed in relation to the offer of online services to a child.

**Legal basis for using your Personal Information**

Data protection and privacy laws requires me to have a “legal basis” or “lawful ground” to collect and handle your personal information. I will only collect, use and share your personal information where I am satisfied that I have an appropriate legal justification to do this.

The following is a summary of the relevant legal bases for the purposes of the Privacy Notice:

* I need to use your personal information to take steps before entering into a contract with you. For example make necessary check as to our ability to provide the necessary psychotherapy and counselling services.
* To satisfy the terms of the Contract between us.
* My use is necessary for the complying with our legal obligations;
* Where it is necessary for my legitimate interests (or those of a third party (to the extent that your interests and fundamental rights do not override those interests), such as:
  + to detect and protect against fraud;
  + to make sure I am following my own internal procedures so I can deliver the best services
  + delivering the requested alerts or updates to you;
  + establishing, exercising or defending my legal rights in the event of a claim;

**Sharing Your Personal Information With Others**

I will only disclose personal information to a third party in very limited circumstances, or where I am permitted to do so by law. The third parties to whom I may provide your personal data include:

* Banks and payment providers to authorise and complete payments
* Government, regulatory and law enforcement bodies where we are required in order:

1. to comply with my legal obligations (including accounting and tax purposes)
2. to exercise my legal rights (e.g. pursue or defend a claim); and
3. for the prevention, detection and investigation of crime.
4. Under the ‘harm rule’ we might have to disclose your personal data and break confidentiality if the following exceptions apply:
   1. Harm to yourself or others
   2. Child protection
   3. Court Evidence
   4. Terrorism

* Therapeutic Executor: Your name and contact details shall be shared with my Therapeutic Executor. This is so that in the event of my death, or other event, which means I am longer able to to work with you, they are able to inform you of this.
* GP/Medical Professional: if your health is at risk and with consent, I may share your contact details with your GP or emergency services.

**Security of Your Personal Information**

Alison McLauchlan Counsellingn and Psychotherapy takes precautions including administrative, technical and physical measures to safeguard your personal information against loss, theft and misuse, as well as against unauthorised access, modification, disclosure, alteration and destruction. We protect electronic data using a variety of security measures including:

* password access and encryption of electronic documents
* data back-up
* paper documents are locked securely in a cabinet
* having a separate mobile phone and email address for business use, which is password protected
* destroying personal information if it is no longer needed for the purposes it was collected

**Erasing your data**

Once we finish our work together, I shall erase the electronic copies of the data and correspondence that I hold within 4 weeks.  Written and printed data will be kept for up to seven years as recommended by my professional body and insurers. After this time all data will be securely destroyed.

**The right to access and be forgotten**

You have the right to ask to see the information that I hold about you and rectify any inaccurate or incomplete personal information held as well as to withdraw consent to me using your personal information at any time.  You have the right to request that any information I hold be erased. (exceptions are if the information is needed to be retained for insurance or legal obligation).

Please note, to ensure security of personal information, I may ask you to verify your identity before proceeding with any such request.

**Complaints**

Any complaints should be addressed to the BACP; however, I hope that to prevent escalation we are able to establish open communication so that you feel able to raise any concerns within our sessions.

You also have the right to contact the Information Commissioner’s Office and file a complaint. (<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>). The Information Commissioner’s Office will then investigate your complaint accordingly. Alison McLauchlan Counselling and Psychotherapy is registered with the ICO: registration number C118845.

**Changes to this Privacy Notice**

I may amend this Privacy Notice from time to time to keep it up to date with legal requirement and the way I operate. This Privacy Notice was last reviewed and updated in September 2023.