

Privacy Policy

Therapists at First Steps Psychological Therapies understand how important your privacy is. We take care to maintain your confidentiality in accordance with current data protection laws (GDPR, 2018) and the ethical guidelines of BABCP/BPS/HPCPC. These guidelines have been set up to protect your confidential material and ensure that your therapist always conducts themselves with professionalism and integrity.

In order to provide you with the best service possible, therapists at First Steps Psychological Therapies will hold your personal contact details and brief notes from your therapy sessions. Please find below important information about how this information will be held and used.

Your Personal Information

We use the secure, encrypted and password protected practice management platform WriteUp to collect and store your personal data. At the point of booking your initial consultation with your therapist you will be asked for your personal contact information, for example your name, email address, and telephone number and you may also choose to share details of the difficulties you are looking for help with.

Your contact information is stored securely in WriteUp and can only be accessed by the admin team and your therapist at First Steps Psychological Therapies.

In order to be able to fulfil our duty of care to you, in your initial consultation or first treatment session, your therapist will ask you for contact information for your GP and elected Emergency Contact person. These details will be stored securely in WriteUp and will only be accessible to your therapist.

This personal information will be held for the duration of your therapy. Please note we keep your records for seven years after therapy, so that we can respond effectively to any potential requests regarding your clinical notes and treatment. This is also required by our insurance and ethical bodies.

We will never pass on your contact details to any third party organisations for the purposes of sales, marketing or research and will never use your personal data for any purposes other than the administration of the therapy services we are providing to you i.e. to arrange, cancel and rearrange appointments and collect payment for sessions.

Your Payment Details

All payments to be made through secure bank transfer to your therapist. If we need to provide a refund we will take your card details over the phone securely and will never keep a record of these details.

Your Therapy Sessions

Everything you discuss with your therapist is confidential. Confidentiality will only be broken if there is concern about your safety or the safety of someone else or instructed to do so by a Court of Law/ by your therapist's governing professional bodies (BABCP/BPS/HCPC). We will always endeavour to speak to you about this first, unless doing so will pose a risk to you or others and we will also consult with a supervisor.

During remote working your therapist will ensure they are conducting online and telephone sessions in a quiet, private and confidential setting. We have selected video calling platforms (MS Teams/ Zoom) that offer end to end encryption to ensure maximum privacy. Please note however that we cannot be held responsible for any breaches that occur due to failures in this technology.

All clinical work will be discussed with a highly experienced supervisor. This is to ensure that your therapist is offering you the best service possible. These conversations are bound by confidentiality and you will only be referred to by your first name.

Your therapist will keep necessary notes of each session. These are anonymised and are in WriteUpp. These notes are for clinical use only and help to keep a track of everything that is being discussed in line with offering effective treatment. In line with industry guidelines, these notes will be kept securely for up to seven years after your therapy comes to an end. After this time, they will be confidentially destroyed.

If your sessions are paid for or arranged via a third party, (e.g. your employer, a friend, or a family member), other than payment requests, invoices or receipts your therapy information will not be shared. Details about what is discussed in your sessions will remain confidential between you and your therapist. Any other information can only be shared if you provide your written consent.

Data Usage

Therapists at first steps psychological therapies will only use your email address and telephone number to contact you about your appointments. Your therapist may also contact you directly via email in order to share information with you that is pertinent to your therapeutic process.

Your phone number may also be used to issue appointment reminders via text message.

Breaches of Data Protection

In the event of any breach of data protection policies, your therapist will notify you and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours and will seek to rectify this immediately.

Raising concerns

Should you have any concerns about our data protection practices, you can raise these directly with your therapist. You can also notify the Information Commissioner's Office.

Your Rights

Any personal data retained by your therapist is kept in accordance with the GDPR, 2018.

Under these guidelines you have the following rights

1. The right to request access to your data

You can request to view the information that we hold about you (contact details, appointment logs etc) at any time. If during therapy you would like to see your session notes, please make this request to your therapist directly. Should you require a copy of your notes after your therapy has come to an end you can make this request by emailing your therapist.

2. The right of rectification

At any point during your time using our service or during the seven years thereafter, while we retain your records, you have the right to request amendments to your contact details or session notes. This right can be exercised by speaking directly to your therapist.

3. The right to be forgotten

You can request that your therapist delete and confidentially destroy the information that they hold about you and your sessions at any time. This request can be made by contacting [insert email address](mailto:insert_email_address)

Instances where we would not be able to comply with your request are as follows:

1. a) It is necessary for us to retain these records in order to continue providing an effective service
2. b) Your therapist is compelled to retain these records by a Court of Law
3. c) Your therapist requires these records in order to establish, exercise or defend legal claims