



Privacy Policy

1. Introduction

Michelle Jean Counselling is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. This Privacy Policy explains how I, as a sole trader, collect, use, and safeguard the personal data you provide during your interactions with my counselling practice.

2. Data Controller

The data controller is **Michelle Cage**, trading as **Michelle Jean Counselling**, operating as a sole trader in the United Kingdom. You can contact me at:

- Address: 46 Lancaster Close, Hamstreet, Ashford. Kent. TN26 2JG
- Email: contact@michellejeancounselling.com
- Phone: 07802735104

3. Data Collection

I collect personal information necessary to provide counselling services. The data I may collect includes:

- Name
- Contact details (email address, phone number, home address)
- Date of birth
- GP or healthcare provider details
- Emergency contact
- Health information relevant to your counselling (e.g., mental health history, medication, medical conditions)

4. Purpose of Data Collection

Your personal data is collected to:

- Provide counselling services
- Contact you regarding appointments and session updates
- Ensure your safety and comply with ethical and legal obligations
- Process payments and maintain financial records
- Comply with professional standards and insurance requirements

5. Legal Basis for Processing

I process your data based on the following legal grounds:

- Contract: To deliver the counselling services as agreed with you.
- Consent: Where specific consent is required (e.g., sharing information with other professionals).
- Legal Obligation: For compliance with UK laws, such as tax and safeguarding requirements.
- Legitimate Interests: For the functioning of my practice, including maintaining client records and ensuring the quality of care.

6. Confidentiality and Data Sharing

Your personal information is confidential. I will not share your data with third parties unless:

- You provide explicit consent.
- There is a legal requirement (e.g., safeguarding or risk of harm).
- I am under a professional duty to disclose information (e.g., to my supervisor or insurance provider).

7. Data Retention

I retain your data for as long as is necessary to fulfil the purposes for which it was collected and to comply with legal and regulatory obligations. Typically, I retain client records for seven years after the end of our counselling relationship, as required by professional standards.

8. Data Security

I take appropriate measures to ensure that your personal data is kept secure. This includes using encrypted devices, secure file storage, and regular reviews of data security protocols. I utilise a practice management software system, WriteUpp, which securely stores data and has two-factor-authentication installed.

9. Your Rights

You have the following rights regarding your personal data:

- Access: You can request access to the personal data I hold about you.
- Rectification: You can ask me to correct any inaccurate or incomplete data.
- Erasure: You can request the deletion of your personal data in certain circumstances.
- Restriction: You can ask me to restrict how I process your data.
- Data Portability: You can request a copy of your personal data in a portable format.
- Objection: You can object to the processing of your data under certain conditions.

To exercise any of these rights, please contact me using the details provided in section 2.

10. Changes to This Privacy Policy

I may update this Privacy Policy from time to time to reflect changes in legal or regulatory obligations. Any changes will be communicated to you via email or posted on my website.

11. Data Protection Complaints

I understand that the information you share with me is highly personal and sensitive. I am committed to protecting your privacy and handling your personal data in line

with data protection law and professional ethical standards, including those set out by the **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**.

In accordance with the **Data Use and Access Act (DUAA)**, I have a clear process in place for managing data protection concerns.

Raising a Concern

If you have any concerns about how your personal data has been collected, used, stored, or shared, I encourage you to contact me. This may include concerns about:

- How your personal or counselling information is recorded or used
- Access to your records (Subject Access Requests)
- Confidentiality or information sharing
- Data security

You can raise a concern via:

Email: contact@michellejeancounselling.com

Phone: 07802 735104

Or by discussing this with me during a session.

I will respond in a respectful, supportive, and non-judgemental way, in line with my professional obligations.

How I Respond

I take all concerns seriously and will:

- Acknowledge your concern promptly
- Treat your information with strict confidentiality
- Consider your concern fairly and in line with legal and ethical guidance
- Provide a clear response outlining the outcome and any actions taken

Confidentiality and Ethical Practice

Confidentiality is a core principle of my practice. However, there are limits to confidentiality where there may be a risk of harm to you or others, or where I am legally required to disclose information. Any such decisions are made carefully, in line with legal requirements and the BACP Ethical Framework.

Escalation

If you feel your concern has not been resolved, you have the right to escalate your complaint to:

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

www.ico.org.uk | 0303 123 1113

You may also seek guidance from the **BACP** if your concern relates to professional conduct:

www.bacp.co.uk

Ongoing Improvement

I reflect on concerns and complaints as part of my commitment to good practice, using them to improve my service and ensure I continue to meet professional and ethical standards.