**Privacy Policy**

At Counselling with Grace, I am committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. This policy outlines how I collect, use, and safeguard your personal information, and it reflects my commitment to comply with applicable privacy regulations, including the GDPR.

### **1. Definitions**

* **Non-Client**: Individuals who contact Counselling with Grace but have not yet commenced counselling.
* **Client**: Individuals receiving, or having previously received, counselling services.
* **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)**: Governs the collection, storage, and processing of personal data.
* **NCPS Code of Ethics**: The ethical guidelines governing my practice, developed by the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPS).
* **Confidentiality**: I am committed to maintaining confidentiality and will not share any information about individuals accessing my services without explicit consent, unless required by law or safeguarding concerns.
* **Safeguarding**: The responsibility to protect individuals from harm, neglect, or abuse. If a safeguarding concern arises, appropriate action may be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the client or others. This may include reporting concerns to relevant authorities in cases of serious risk.

### **2. Data Collection and Use**

I collect personal information from both clients and non-clients to provide appropriate services. This information is handled with the utmost care and is used solely for the purpose of delivering counselling services.

**Non-Clients**: Upon initial contact, I collect basic personal details such as your name, contact information, and any relevant details you wish to share. This information will only be retained for up to six months if no further interaction occurs. Should you have any concerns regarding the handling of your data, please contact me directly.

**Introductory Sessions**: During initial consultations, additional personal information may be gathered, which will be retained for up to one year or longer if you proceed with formal counselling. All data will be stored securely and treated with confidentiality.

**Clients**: I collect the following personal information:

* Full name
* Home address
* Contact details (phone number, email)
* Next of kin and GP information (if provided)

This information is used to provide counselling services and will be stored in compliance with GDPR. I will not share this information with third parties without your consent, unless required by law or for safeguarding purposes.

### **3. Counselling Session Data**

I also collect sensitive data shared during counselling sessions. This data may include personal reflections, experiences, and emotions. This information is stored in clinical notes, which are retained for up to seven years after the end of your counselling sessions, or longer if necessary, with your consent.

**Session Notes**: These notes document the key themes, discussions, and any safeguarding issues addressed in each session. The notes will be retained in accordance with ethical guidelines and may be accessed only by you or with your consent, subject to any legal obligations.

**Process Notes**: These are personal notes maintained by me for professional purposes, such as reflection and continuity of care. These notes are not shared with clients and will be destroyed when they are no longer needed, typically after the cessation of therapy.

### **4. Data Security & Third-Party Services**

All personal data is stored electronically and securely. Devices are password-protected, and your data will never be shared with third parties without your consent. I am registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).

I may use secure third-party services to facilitate my counselling practice, such as:

* **Email and communication providers**: For sending and receiving messages related to appointments and client support.
* **Cloud storage services**: For securely storing client notes and documents in compliance with data protection regulations.
* **Online booking systems**: If applicable, to schedule counselling sessions.

All third-party services used comply with GDPR regulations to ensure the protection of your data. If you would like more information about specific third-party providers I use, please contact me directly.

If you believe your data has been compromised, please contact me immediately. Should you remain unsatisfied with the resolution, you have the right to contact the ICO directly.

### **5. Data Breach Policy**

In the event of a data breach, I will take immediate action to assess and mitigate any risks. If a breach is likely to result in a risk to your rights and freedoms, I will report it to the ICO within 72 hours, in accordance with GDPR regulations. If the breach poses a high risk to your personal data, I will also inform you without undue delay, providing relevant details and any recommended steps to protect yourself. I will review and update security measures to prevent future breaches.

### **6.** **Supervision and Confidentiality**

In line with ethical practice, I participate in regular clinical supervision. While personal details are not shared in supervision, any relevant client information may be discussed to improve the quality of care. Supervisors are bound by the same confidentiality agreement to protect your privacy.

### **7. Clinical Will**

In accordance with the NCPS Code of Ethics, in the event of my incapacity or death, a nominated professional will be informed and will handle client data to ensure the continuity of care. Clients will be contacted about this process to ensure a smooth transition.

### **8. Client Rights and Data Access**

Under GDPR, you have the right to access, rectify, or request the deletion of your personal data at any time. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact me in writing.