

# Manna House

Counselling Service



Serving the Community

## **Manna House Counselling Service (MHCS)**

### **Data Protection - Client Contract**

Date	22/03/23
Review Date	27/03/24, 19/03/25,
Next Review Date	March 2026

### **What information we hold about you and why**

#### **1. The Information we will hold**

- 1.1 In order for us to be able to fulfil our responsibilities as a Counselling Service we will need to record certain information about you. This information includes:
- your name
  - address
  - contact details i.e., landline, mobile numbers and e-mail addresses
  - GP Practice.
- 1.2 We will also take personal details that are relevant for counselling such as:
- medical information
  - relevant aspects of your personal, social and family history (that you choose to share with us).

- counselling session notes – see below (Information about your counselling sessions and our work together).

1.3 The information will be retained on hard copies and stored in separate locations (keeping your name and contact details separate from the personal details).

## **2. Why we need this Information**

2.1 Your contact details will be used to contact you. Other personal data such as your name, address and/or date of birth will be used to verify your identity if the need ever arises.

2.2 This personal information will be held for a period of three years after your counselling finishes (in case you decide to return after a break) or unless we mutually agree a decision to retain it for longer or where we believe that it is in your best professional interests to do so.

2.3 In the event that your counsellor is incapacitated, your contact details alone will be shared with a supervisor or other senior member of staff so that they can contact you to explain the situation and discuss options.

## **3. Information about your counselling sessions and our work together**

3.1 Your counsellor will record notes of each therapy session under an identifying code or first name only or initials. These notes will be a brief factual record of the session. This set of notes will include any agreements made with regard to, for example, cancelled sessions or changes to the way the therapy is conducted. The notes are held in protected files in a secure filing system.

3.2 These notes may be shared with a counsellor's supervisor for the purposes of maintaining professional standards and helping a counsellor's professional development (your name, address etc. will not be used).

3.3 MHCS may make information from these notes available to legitimate third parties under the following conditions:

- Receipt of a request from you or your representative, and where the release of the notes is not judged by MHCS as likely to cause you significant harm or harm to another person for example, to an insurance company, employers etc.
- Where there is a specific legal requirement for MHCS to do so for example, a request by a court.
- Where there is an ethical duty for MHCS to do so, for example, to avoid serious harm to yourself or another person, including the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.

## **4. Records of contact between us**

4.1 Your MHCS counsellor may hold your name and telephone number on their mobile phone in case they need to contact you for example, to cancel or change an appointment at short notice. Your number will be deleted from their phone when

counselling finishes. Counsellors' phones are password protected. MHCS has a mobile phone for text messaging purposes only. This is stored securely when not in use.

- 4.2 If MHCS have agreed with you to communicate by text or by email, these records may be kept for the same duration as your counselling notes.

## **5. Your Rights**

- 5.1 You have the right to ask to see any information held by MHCS about you. To do this please either ask your counsellor or submit a request in writing for the attention of the MHCS Data Protection Officer. You also have the right to ask for information that you believe to be incorrect to be rectified. MHCS will endeavour to respond to a request within four weeks.
- 5.2 If these notes contain references to other individuals, these may not be available to you, as protection is also granted to third parties. For example, if your file includes a letter or additional information from the person responsible for your clinical care, usually GP or psychiatrist, consent from the relevant practitioner will need to be obtained first before sharing this with you.
- 5.3 If MHCS becomes aware of a situation where your personal information may have accidentally or maliciously been obtained by a third party, you will be notified within three days.
- 5.4 If you are concerned about the way that your information is being held, please discuss this with your counsellor. If you are still unhappy, you have the right to complain to the MHCS Data Protection Officer in writing c/o The Manna House, UoN Innovation Centre, Green Street, Northampton NN1 1SY.
- 5.5 If you remain unhappy with this response, please contact the Information Commissioners Office. You will find further information at: <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

## **6. Agreement**

- 6.1 Please sign the application form to indicate that you agree that your personal information will be held for the purposes of counselling with MHCS. Without your agreement to MHCS holding your personal information, it will not be possible to proceed with counselling.

## **7. Code of Ethics**

- 7.1 All counsellors adhere to the Association of Christians in Counselling (ACC) and/or the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling. Copies are available on request.
- 7.2 All counsellors work according to MHCS Mission, Ethos and Values (2024). Copies are available on request.