SearchLight Counselling and Therapy

SearchLight Counselling and Therapy – Data Protection & Privacy Policy

1. **Introduction at SearchLight Counselling and Therapy,** we are committed to protecting your personal information and being transparent about how we collect, use, and store it. This policy explains what data we collect from you, why we collect it, how we keep it safe, and your rights under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. We provide mediation services **online**, and we use **Zanda** as our secure case management system.

2. **Who we are**

   SearchLight Counselling & Therapy

   Charity Number: 1079270

   Company Number: 3909277

   Address: Moorcroft Centre for the Community, Westfield, Woking, GU22 9PB

   Email: appointments@searchlightcounsellingandtherapy.org.uk

   We act as the **Data Controller,** meaning we decide how your personal information is used.

3. **What information we collect**

   We collect information directly from you when you enquire about, register for, or receive mediation.

   Personal information you provide

   - Contact details: name, address, phone number, email
   - Demographic information: date of birth, gender (if you choose to share it)
   - Emergency contact details
   - Information relevant to your mediation: presenting issues, background information, session notes
   - Payment information if you pay for sessions
   - Accessibility or support needs

   Sensitive information (special category data)

   Because we provide mediation, we may collect:

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- Information about your mental health
- Information about relationships or family circumstances
- Information about risk or safeguarding concerns

We only collect this information with **your explicit consent** and only when it is necessary for providing mediation safely and ethically.

4. How we collect your information

We collect information in the following ways:

- When you contact us by phone, email, website form, or social media
- During your assessment process
- During mediation sessions
- Through Zanda, our secure case management system
- Through online platforms if you attend sessions online

We do **not** collect data through webchat, marketing tools, or automated profiling systems.

5. How we use your information

We use your personal information to:

- Provide mediation safely and effectively
- Contact you about appointments or service updates
- Assess suitability for mediation
- Maintain accurate clinical records
- Manage payments or donations
- Meet safeguarding or legal obligations
- Monitor service quality (using anonymised data only)

We do **not** use your information for marketing unless we have asked you explicitly to opt in.

6. Our lawful bases for processing

We process your data under the following lawful bases:

- Contract – to provide mediation services you have requested

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- Legitimate interests – to manage appointments and service administration
- Vital interests – if we believe you or someone else is at risk of serious harm
- Legal obligation – safeguarding, court orders, or regulatory requirements
- Explicit consent – for special category data used in mediation

7. How we store your information Your information is stored securely in:

- Zanda – our encrypted case management system
- Password-protected email accounts
- Locked filing systems (if paper notes are used)

Zanda is GDPR-compliant and stores data on secure servers within approved jurisdictions. We take appropriate technical and organisational measures to keep your information safe.

8. How long we keep your information

We keep mediation records for **7 years** after your final session, in line with professional guidance and insurance requirements. For children and young people, records may be kept until the client reaches 25. After this period, records are securely destroyed.

9. When we may share your information

We will not share your information with third parties unless:

- You give explicit consent
- We are legally required to do so (e.g., court order)
- There is a safeguarding concern and we believe you or someone else is at risk
- We work with trusted providers who support our service (e.g., Zanda) We will always aim to discuss this with you unless doing so would increase risk. We do **not** sell or trade your information.

10. Your rights

You have the right to:

- Access your information

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- Request corrections
- Request deletion (in certain circumstances)
- Restrict processing
- Object to processing
- Request a copy of your data in a portable format

To exercise these rights, contact: appointments@searchlightcounsellingandtherapy.org.uk

11. Updates to this policy

We may update this policy from time to time. The latest version will always be available on our website or by request.

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