

Last updated: 30.10.26

Safeguarding policy

Purpose and scope

This policy explains how I protect adults who use my counselling service and others who may be at risk of serious harm, in line with the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions 2026 (sections 2.4 and 3.3).

It applies to all clients aged 18 and over, whether we meet in person at my therapy studio in Chalfont St Giles or online. I am the only practitioner and also the safeguarding lead.

An "adult at risk" is someone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and cannot protect themselves because of those needs (Care Act 2014, England). Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own laws. Where a client lives outside England, I follow the law of the place where they live.

My responsibilities

I commit to:

- holding an enhanced DBS certificate and keeping it current through the Update Service
- completing safeguarding training for adults and children and refreshing it every 3 years
- knowing how to contact local authority adult safeguarding team
- discussing safeguarding concerns in clinical supervision

- making this policy available to every client, on my website and on request
- treating every client fairly and making reasonable adjustments where I can

What counts as a safeguarding concern

I treat the following as safeguarding concerns:

- abuse or neglect of an adult at risk, including physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory and domestic abuse, coercive control, modern slavery and self-neglect
- a client at serious risk of suicide or of serious self-harm
- a client who may seriously harm another person
- a child or young person who may be at risk of harm
- serious crime
- a client who is being exploited or controlled by someone else

How I respond to a concern

Confidentiality is the starting point and it has limits. My working agreement explains these limits to clients before we begin. When I have a concern, I:

1. Listen and stay calm. I never promise to keep a disclosure secret.
2. Check whether anyone is in immediate danger. If so, I call 999.
3. Talk with the client where possible and safe and ask for consent to involve others. Adults with capacity can make their own choices, including choices I would not make for them.
4. Consult my supervisor as soon as I can, without identifying the client unless I need to.
5. Decide whether to share information. I share it with the client's consent. Without consent, I share it only where the law requires or permits it, for example where someone is at risk of serious harm, a child is at risk or a serious crime is involved. I share the minimum needed and only with those who need it.

6. Contact the right service: the local authority adult safeguarding team, the police, the client's GP, crisis team or children's services. If I am unsure of a legal duty, I take advice from BACP or my insurer.

7. Record what happened and why (see below).

8. Review the outcome with my supervisor and tell the client what I did, unless that would increase the risk.

If I cannot work collaboratively with a client, for example because of risk or capacity, I record why, as the Ethical Framework requires.

Records and supervision

For every safeguarding concern I keep a factual record of what was said, the risks I identified, who I consulted, what I decided and why, whether I involved the client and the outcome. I store it securely with my other client records, in line with UK GDPR and my privacy notice.

I discuss safeguarding concerns in supervision to support safe and ethical practice. The decision to act on a concern stays with me.

Children and young people

If a client tells me a child may be at risk, I follow the same steps and contact children's services in the area where the child lives, or the police if the child is in immediate danger. The NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000) offers advice to anyone with a concern about a child.

Concerns about this service

If you are worried about how I have handled a safeguarding matter, please tell me at lji@towardsmeaningcounselling.co.uk and I will respond in writing. If we cannot resolve it, you can reach out to BACP through the [Get help with counselling concerns service](#).

Changes to this policy

I review this policy annually to reflect changes in law or in my practice. The "Last updated" date at the top of the policy shows when it was most recently revised.