

Privacy Policy

Deal and Walmer Counselling Services

Who We Are

Deal and Walmer Counselling Services is a team of independently registered counsellors and group facilitators working under a shared name. Each counsellor operates as a separate practitioner and is individually responsible for the data they collect and process.

Although we work collaboratively under a shared name, your personal information is managed solely by the counsellor or facilitator you work with.

We are committed to protecting your information in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

Initial Enquiries

When you contact us via our website or our shared email address (info@dealandwalmercounselling.co.uk), your enquiry is treated as **confidential within the service**.

This means:

- Your message may be accessed by more than one team member, solely for the purpose of reviewing your request and matching you with a suitable counsellor or facilitator.
- We only use your contact and personal information to respond to your enquiry and arrange a referral.
- Enquiry emails are stored securely and are only retained for as long as necessary to process your request, or for a maximum of 6 months if no service is taken up.

Once you begin working with a specific counsellor or group facilitator, they will provide their own privacy policy and take full responsibility for your data from that point onwards.

What Data We Collect

Depending on the service you access, we may collect the following information:

- Your name and contact details
- Emergency contact and GP information (with consent)
- Session notes or assessments
- Payment or invoicing details
- Website usage data (e.g. cookies, IP address, device type)
- Group registration or attendance information (if applicable)

Why We Collect It

We collect and use your personal data to:

- Provide counselling or group services effectively and safely
- Communicate about sessions, changes, or cancellations
- Maintain appropriate records for clinical and professional purposes
- Fulfil ethical, safeguarding, or legal obligations
- Improve our website or services (in anonymised form)

Data Storage & Retention

- Your data is stored securely, either digitally (in encrypted files or secure platforms) or physically (in locked storage).
- Personal data is typically retained for **seven years** after therapy ends, in line with guidance from professional bodies such as BACP and NCPS.
- You have the right to request access to, correction of, or deletion of your data, within the limits of legal or ethical obligations.

Group Services

If you attend a group session or workshop facilitated under the Deal and Walmer Counselling Services name:

- Basic attendance and contact information may be collected centrally for administrative purposes.
- Group facilitators are bound by the same confidentiality and data protection standards as individual counsellors.
- Participants are asked to respect the confidentiality of others in group settings.

A separate [Group Work & Psychoeducation Policy] is available for more detail on how your data is handled in group settings.

Your Rights

Under data protection law, you have the right to:

- Access the personal data held about you
- Request that incorrect or outdated data be corrected
- Withdraw consent where applicable
- Request deletion of data, where appropriate
- File a complaint with the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**: www.ico.org.uk

Contacting Us About Your Data

To make a request or raise a concern about your personal data, please contact your individual counsellor or facilitator directly. Each practitioner is independently registered with the ICO and responsible for their own data handling.

If your request relates to a shared service (such as a group or initial enquiry), you can also contact us at: info@dealandwalmercounselling.co.uk

