

Counselling and Mental Health Privacy Notice

If you need this document in an alternative format, please enquire through your Student Portal. Below is some important information we would like you to be aware of. Your clinician will go through this with you at your first appointment. Please feel free to ask any questions.

1. Introduction and Data Controller

The University of Northumbria at Newcastle (“we”, “our”, “us”) is registered with the Information Commissioners Office as a Data Controller - Registration Number [Z7674926](#). We are committed to processing personal data in accordance with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and related UK data protection legislation.

This privacy notice describes how and why we process personal data in relation individuals (“you”, “your”) registering with our Counselling and Mental Health Support Team (CMHST) and explains how you can exercise your rights under the GDPR.

2. What Personal Data Do We Process?

To carry out our activities and to manage our relationship with you, maintain contact with you and to provide our services to you, CMHST needs to process the following categories of data:

Personal Data:

- Biographical information (e.g., Name, student number and date of birth).
- Contact details (e.g. Address, email and telephone numbers).
- Study related information (e.g. Course, level of study, campus).
- Your GP details.
- Details of any third parties you have consented us to liaise with.

Special Category Data

- Data relating to Health (Details of why you are seeking support, any disability, details of support you have had in the past, notes written by counsellors etc)
- Information about your personal circumstances, racial and ethnic origin, religious or other similar beliefs

3. What Is Our Lawful Basis for Processing?

We process your personal data under several different legal bases, including the following:

- GDPR Art.6 1(c) Compliance with a legal obligation, namely the Equality Act 2010 (and formerly the Disability Discrimination Act).
- GDPR Art.6 1(e) Performance of the University’s public task (the provision of education) and ensuring reasonable adjustments are made where appropriate to facilitate your education.

- Where necessary, under GDPR Art.9.2 (a) where you have provided your explicit consent for us to process (which you may withdraw at any time).
- Art 9.2.(c) where processing may also be necessary to protect your or another person's vital interests;
- Art 9.2.(h) – for the purposes of the provision of health systems and services.
- Art 9.3. – personal data may be processed under this condition when the data are processed for the purpose referred to in Art.9.3 (h) when the data is processed by or under the responsibility of a professional subject to the obligation of professional secrecy by UK law or by rules established by national competent bodies, which in this case are BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy).
- Under section 10(3) and Schedule 1(17) of the Data Protection Act 2018 - processing of special category personal data is necessary for the provision of confidential counselling, advice or support, etc.

4. Where Do We Get Your Personal Data From?

In order for you to access the services of the CMHST, you will need to complete our registration form on the [Student Portal](#) where you will be asked to provide your personal information. Further information will be generated through your contact with the service, including the production of session notes.

As part of a project to address student mental health in Newcastle, Northumbria University has partnered with mental health services at Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW). Information may be shared with your explicit consent by CNTW clinical staff with CMHST to ensure the continuity of safe and qualitative care and treatment for you. Data may also be shared with us by CNTW without your consent only when it is deemed essential to do so in an emergency (Vital interests of you or another individual), for example where you are incapable of providing consent, or if there is a lawful basis to do so.

5. How and Why Do We Use Your Personal Data?

To facilitate your access to CMHST services, we process your personal data in order to:

- Register you on our systems and undertake an initial assessment
- Manage your appointments with our counsellors
- Record progress and outcomes of the counselling sessions
- Prepare and disseminate reports to enable Reasonable Adjustments be put in place for you if required.

CMHST is required to produce reports, constructed from the data held by the team. These reports contain anonymous quantitative statistics to inform the department of Student Life and Wellbeing and the University about the work it is doing. Occasionally, other similar reports are provided by the CMHST to others to demonstrate the kind of work the team is engaged in but all data is anonymised.

6. How do we keep your Personal Data Secure?

The University adheres to the code of ethics of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Access to your personal and sensitive information, including session notes, is limited to members of the Counselling Service who 'need to know', for the effective running of the service and the safeguarding of students and others. This means that information is only accessible by staff within the CMHST, although on rare occasions the system administrator and Senior Management may require access.

All contact with the CMHST is subject to University Regulations. Ask4Help staff have access to limited information about students accessing Counselling and Mental Health Support. This information is held for the purposes of appointment management only and includes student name, number and contact details.

Accessing your records

- For confirmation of dates/times of appointments please send a message to the CMHST via your Student Portal
- To read your counselling and mental health notes please send your request to the Head of Wellbeing and Mental Health - for address see Counselling and Mental Health Support Agreement Supplementary Information on the pages below
- For a copy of your counselling and mental health notes you will need to make a Data Subject Access Request to the University Data Protection Officer (details below).

7. Sharing your Personal Data with Third Parties

With your consent, we may share some of your personal data with third parties outside of the University such as CNTW, your GP, or other relevant medical professionals or any parties that you name.

What you tell us remains confidential within our team, however there are rare exceptional circumstances when confidentiality can be broken, for example where obtaining your consent is not possible and we consider sharing the data to be in your vital interests as permitted under GDPR and where it is deemed necessary to do so by a trained health professional.

We may on occasion be required to share information where there is a legal requirement to do so under the exemptions provided under the UK Data Protection Act 2018. Such sharing will only after full consideration of your rights and interests by the Data Protection Officer.

These exemptions might include situations in which a person's life is in danger (yours or someone else's), a situation in which there is active or historical child abuse, a serious crime, active terrorism or issues affecting the safe practice of those on professional training courses. This list is not exhaustive. In one of these rare situations, your clinician will try to contact you and discuss how the boundaries of confidentiality will be kept or extended if necessary.

8. How Long will your Personal Data Be Held?

We will retain your personal data for as long as it is required to fulfil the purpose for which it is held and then to fulfil any legal requirements. Details of the retention periods for each type of processing activity is detailed in our retention schedule which is available on our [website here](#). This can be summarised as data being held for seven years after your last appointment.

9. What Are Your Rights Under GDPR?

GDPR provides individuals a number of rights in relation to the processing of personal data, each of which may apply to differing degrees' dependent upon the nature of the processing and the legal basis for it. You have the right to:

- Be informed as to how we use your data (via this privacy notice)
- Request access (a copy) of the personal information that we hold about you.
- Correct inaccurate or incomplete data
- Request that we stop sending you direct marketing communications.

In certain circumstances, you may also have the right to:

- Ask to have certain data 'erased by us.
- Request that we restrict certain processing of your personal data.
- Request that we provide any data you submitted to us electronically be returned to you or passed to a third party as a data file.
- Object to certain processing of your personal data by us

10. Data Protection Officer (DPO) Contact Details

Our Data Protection officer is Duncan James. To exercise your rights, including to request copies of your counselling notes, or if you wish to raise a concern about our processing of your data, please contact the DPO on +44 (0)191 243 7357 or via email at dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk.

11. Lodging a Complaint with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

If you are dissatisfied with our processing of your data, or a response to a complaint you have made to us, you have the right to complain to the ICO via Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745, via email: casework@ico.org.uk or for more information see [Information Commissioner's web site](#).

Counselling and Mental Health Support Agreement Information

If you need this document in an alternative format, please enquire through your Student Portal.

Counselling and Mental Health Support is available to all Northumbria University students studying in the UK. The services available from the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team (CMHST) are:

- Short-term counselling
- Mental health practitioner appointments
- Wellbeing check-in appointments
- Online guided self-help
- Workshops

We aim to offer you the service(s) most appropriate to your individual needs and wishes.

Information about your clinician

Counsellors

The CMHST is an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The counsellors are all accredited/senior accredited individual members of BACP or UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) or working towards accreditation. Part of BACP's 'Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions' requires counsellors to explain what is involved in counselling so that students can make an informed choice; this BACP document can be found at <http://www.bacp.co.uk>.

Mental Health Practitioners

The Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs) come from different professions and are registered with a relevant professional body. Please feel free to ask for information about their professional body when/if you meet with them.

Supervision for your clinician

It is an ethical requirement of all of their professional bodies that clinicians in the CMHST receive supervision. Supervision involves the clinician talking to someone within their profession, who is external to the university, about their work. This may involve talking anonymously about the work they have been doing with you. Clinicians also discuss their current student work in team meetings.

Practical issues

Communicating with the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team

Any communication with us is likely to be via the Student Portal - please log in and check your notifications regularly. You can also email us on:

as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk

How to make an appointment?

If you would like to access counselling and mental health support, simply fill in our online registration form, which is available on [The Student Portal](#) (you will need to be logged in to view this information). If you would like help completing the form, please contact our administration team. You can do this by enquiring through your Student Portal.

Cancelling or re-arranging an appointment

If you need to cancel or re-arrange an appointment, it is important that you let us know so that we can offer that appointment to someone else. In order to cancel or re-arrange, please contact our administration team by sending us a message through your Student Portal or email us on: as.counsellingandmentalhealth@northumbria.ac.uk. If you do not turn up to an appointment, or do not give us at least 24 hours' notice, the session that you miss may count as one of your allocated sessions.

Letters of support for Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs)

Please note that the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team does not provide individual letters of support for students who are applying for Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) or for funding issues. Students are advised to contact their GP/doctor, who may or may not be able to help with evidence to support your PEC form. We can provide you with a record of attendance, if necessary. A record of attendance will simply state how many appointments you have attended with our team and can be submitted with a PEC claim. If you would like to request a record of attendance, please speak to our administration team (contact details above).

***Communicating with the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team During the Covid 19 Pandemic **

- The practitioner will call you at a prearranged time. The telephone call will come from a private number. Please ensure that you won't be disturbed for the duration of session (up to 45 minutes)

- You should not be driving, or anywhere public where the conversation could potentially be overheard, for the duration of the appointment
- Please make sure you are in an area with a good mobile signal/internet connection
- If there are technical difficulties during the phone/video call, the practitioner will try again to make contact, during the 45-minute session. The practitioner may contact you within this time to check with you how you would like to proceed
- If you don't answer the phone/video call the practitioner will attempt to contact, you a further 1-2 times

Disability support for students with mental health issues

The Equality Act 2010 (and formerly the Disability Discrimination Act) states that a person has a disability if he or she 'has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The University has a statutory duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled students where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled. The 'reasonable adjustment' may be to remove or alter the provision, criteria or practice or to provide an auxiliary aid or service to the disabled student to remove or reduce the disadvantage.

The purpose of the support recommended is to remove/reduce the disadvantage that you may experience in accessing your programme of study because of your disability. If you consider that your mental health issue meets the definition of a 'disability' as set out in the Equality Act 2010, please let us know.

Comments and complaints

Informal procedure

If you have any feedback on your CMHST, or if you have any concerns about any aspects of the work, the best person for you to speak to in the first instance is your clinician. In most cases this will be the quickest way to enable us to address your concern. If you are not able to discuss a concern with your clinician or if you raise the matter and it remains unresolved, you may decide to make a formal complaint.

Formal procedure

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the CMHST and wish to make a formal complaint, you can do this by putting your complaint in writing to the Head of Wellbeing and Mental Health. If you do not want to contact the Head of Wellbeing and Mental Health, you can put your formal complaint in writing to the Assistant Director of Student and Library Services. The address is at the end of this document.

The University's complaints procedure

Northumbria University has a Student Complaints Procedure which is in Section 10 of the Handbook of Student Regulations <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-governance/vice-chancellors-office/legal-services-team/handbook-of-student-regulations/> Should you require advice or assistance in completing the complaints form, or in relation to any other aspect of the Complaints Procedure, you can contact the University's Student Appeals and Complaints Ombudsman, the Students' Union or the University's Student Life and Wellbeing service.

Complaints to the relevant professional body

If you wish to make a formal complaint about a clinician in addition to the above procedure, you can make a formal complaint to the relevant professional body. Details can be obtained from our administration team.

Evaluations

We always welcome feedback about your experience of using any aspect of our service. We will send out a link to our evaluation survey by email at various times throughout the year. We endeavour to ensure that you will only receive one survey each year and you will have been asked on your registration form if you are happy for us to contact you. These surveys are anonymous and treated as confidential. It would be very helpful if you were able to return it to us with your comments.

The wider department within which our team sits, Student Life and Wellbeing, may also send you a survey to seek your feedback about the services you have received.

Counselling and Mental Health Support Team

Student Life and Wellbeing

Northumbria University

Sandyford Building

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 8ST

Counselling and Mental Health Support Declaration

By signing this document, I confirm that I have read and understood **Counselling and Mental Health Privacy Notice** and the **Counselling and Mental Health Support Agreement Information** and I agree to access the support offered by the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team based on the terms and processes stated within these documents:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I consent to **Counselling and Mental Health Support** sharing my information with third parties, where the need arises. This can include my GP, Locality Mental Health NHS Services and/or Local Support Services (for example Carer Support, Drug and Alcohol, Eating Distress etc), as outlined in Section 7 of the Counselling and Mental Health Privacy Notice. Please tick boxes and sign below.

- GP or Consultant
- Locality NHS Mental Health Services
- Relevant Third Party Support Services

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____