**Liverpool John Moores University Counselling Service**

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| Please read the following information and sign below to indicate that you understand and agree with how the Counselling Service will be working with you and processing personal data, which is recorded about you. The document covers:   1. counselling and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 2. informed consent; 3. the boundaries of confidentiality and when confidentiality may be broken.   You may also talk to your counsellor about this when you speak to them during an appointment/session. |

**Data Protection Act and Record Keeping**

**What Data is recorded about me?**

*At an Initial Consultation or during a Drop-in Session*

You are asked to provide some key data at an initial consultation , for example, your name, address and any contact details including email, phone number , the course you are studying, medical history, your GP details, and a summary of your reasons for coming to see a counsellor.

*After each counselling session*

Further *very brief* records are also kept of individual appointments. These records contain attendance dates and a summary of what was covered during a session.

**Why does the Counselling Service need this information about me?**

The Counselling Service requires this information so that counsellors can:

1. easily make contact with students/staff to arrange appointments;
2. make an accurate assessment of student/staff counselling needs;
3. ensure appropriate allocations to a suitable counsellor take place;
4. provide statistical information to the university about the quality and usage of the counselling service;
5. track the progress of a student/staff member and number of sessions attended.
6. So that we can appropriately signpost you to other/further services, with your written permission.

**How is this data stored and processed?**

All records are stored electronically on a secure site and only members of the Counselling and Mental Health Service have access to them. Records will be stored for a maximum of 6 years.

Your counsellor or a member of the Counselling and Mental Health service team are the only persons who will have access to your records.  All records are kept in accordance with GDPR and DPA 2018.  You can find more information about Data Protection at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/data-protection-and-freedom-of-information/data-protection> . You can find further information about the GDPR from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) www.ico.org.uk.

**Informed Consent**

The GDPR and DPA 2018 requires that we gain your explicit, informed consent to maintain these records. Your counsellor will discuss this further with you during your initial appointment/drop in session. At the end of this form you will be asked to sign, giving your consent for your personal information to be processed and held by the counselling service. If you do not want some information that you disclose recorded, please speak to your counsellor who will gladly comply with your wishes. If you do not understand anything please do ask, it is important that you can give your informed consent.

**Access to Records**

The GDPR and DPA 2018 allows counselling client’s access to their records on request. After you have forwarded your request, in writing, to the University Data protection Office - <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/data-protection>

your notes will be forwarded to you.

**Release of information**

Students who are engaged in counselling, may request letters:

1. in support of extenuating circumstances,
2. for funding agencies or medical or psychotherapeutic agencies.
3. When making a referral to an internal or external service or agency

However, before any information can be released, you will be asked to give your consent by signing a “Release of Information” form specifying who we may contact and broadly agreeing what will be said.

Letters in support of compensation claims or legal matters cannot be provided by the Counselling Service.

**Confidentiality**

The Counselling service operates with the highest levels of confidentially. On occasion, the counsellor may need to discuss details with another member of the team on a need to know basis. This will normally be to enhance the quality of service available to you. The Counsellor will always aim to discuss this with you, wherever possible, before taking any action. You and your counsellor will make a confidentiality agreement at the first meeting that you have . For further information, you may contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk) Tel: 01455 883300. Note, there are some exceptions to maintaining confidentiality.

**Exceptions to confidentiality**

*Risk of Harm to Self or Others -*  If a counsellor believes there is serious risk of harm to yourself or others, they may need to disclose information to a third party (e.g. a GP or a Student Services colleague). We would always try to discuss this with you first and gain your express written consent to the disclosure.

In very extreme situations, for example where an individual has disappeared in worrying circumstances, or it is believed that a client is unable to make rational decisions regarding their own or others’ safety, information will be disclosed without first discussing it.

**Confidentiality and the law**

*Civil or Criminal Court Proceedings -* Counsellors may also disclose sensitive personal data where refusal would make them liable to civil or criminal court proceedings. Your counsellor would inform you of this need to break confidentiality should a situation arise.

*Terrorism Act 2000 -* This Act places an obligation on counsellors, as citizens, to pass on information about a planned or actual terrorist offence. Failure to do so is a criminal offence. It is also an offence for counsellors to inform the client or any other person that information has been passed to the authorities, where such a disclosure is likely to prejudice any investigation.

**Supervision**

All counsellors are obliged to receive supervision from another professional, which is usually another counsellor or psychotherapist. This involves sharing information from counselling sessions and is aimed at ensuring counsellors provide a quality service and appropriate support to clients. Supervision is also a confidential process and no personal information is shared that might lead to the identification of clients.