

Privacy Policy

Updated March 2021.

When working with a Psychologist, it is essential that clients can have total confidence that any information shared is handled securely, safely and in compliance with legislation. Dr Rachel M Allan is committed to protecting information through safe and responsible data handling.

Information gathered by Dr Rachel M Allan is handled in accordance with laws concerning the protection of personal data (UK Data Protection Bill 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018). Dr Rachel M Allan is the data controller, and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office.

This policy covers the procedures followed by Dr Rachel M Allan to protect the information of therapy and supervision clients and any other clients contracting with Dr Rachel M Allan for professional psychological services. For the purposes of this policy, the term "client" covers each and all of these client groups.

1. What information is collected?

In order to make an enquiry about services, the client's name, e-mail address and a brief summary of the client's query are required. This is to enable a response to initial enquiries. Dr Rachel M Allan recommends that prospective clients provide only minimal information about their mental health and personal circumstances when making an initial website or e-mail enquiry. The purpose of the initial enquiry is to set up a phone consultation, were there will an opportunity to describe difficulties or service requirements in more detail.

Further information is collected and stored at the assessment appointment. This includes a full name, residential address, date of birth, phone number, e-mail address, emergency contact details, GP information and details of any other professional involved in the client's mental health care. Insurer details are collected if applicable.

Written notes are taken during therapy and supervision sessions. These are transferred to an encrypted digital drive at the end of the clinic, and paper notes are shredded. Professional Psychology clinical practice requires clinical note taking. Clinical notes contain sensitive information relevant to therapy.

Additional therapy or supervision documents such as psychological outcome measures, or formulation information completed between the client and Dr Rachel M Allan are handled in the same way.

Clients are given the opportunity to complete a feedback form at the end of therapy, supervision and training. These are anonymised and stored securely. Clients are not obliged to complete a feedback sheet.

Dr Rachel M Allan strongly advises that clients do not include sensitive information in e-mails, text messages or any other method of written communication.

2. Why is this information collected?

Information is collected by Dr Rachel M Allan in order to provide professional services.

Contact details are kept so that clients can be contacted you appointment scheduling or other arrangements pertaining to organising service delivery. Dr Rachel M Allan will use the client's e-mail address as the primary mode of contact for matters relating to appointments. E-mail is vulnerable to viruses and human error. For this reason, Dr Rachel M Allan advises clients to be thoughtful about what is included in e-mails to Dr Rachel M Allan and to consider which e-mail you choose to use to make contact. If you would prefer that another primary mode of contact is used, please notify Dr Rachel M Allan.

E-mail is used to provide clients with an online invitation to join sessions via Zoom. E-mail may be used to share password-protected documents pertaining to therapy, pending mutual agreement. For self-funding clients, e-mail is used to provide a record of payment for services, which is sent via an encrypted link.

Dr Rachel M Allan may contact clients by text message to advise of a last minute change to an appointment. Dr Rachel M Allan requests that text message is used for the sole purpose of appointment scheduling. Dr Rachel M Allan strongly advises that clients do not use text message for the communication of sensitive information.

Dr Rachel M Allan may use a client's mobile phone number to reach the client via Whatsapp when using this back-up method of video call for online sessions. This will be done by mutual agreement between the client and Dr Rachel M Allan.

GP details are required to allow Dr Rachel M Allan to share information with a client's GP should Dr Rachel M Allan assess that this is required to safeguard physical and/or emotional health.

Emergency contact details are stored should an emergency situation related to a client's health and wellbeing arise during an appointment, and notification it is deemed essential to the client's wellbeing and safety.

If applicable, details of the client's insurance policy are collected in order to allow Dr Rachel M Allan to verify the client's insurance cover and process payment from the insurance provider.

Information, including any sensitive information provided by the client, deemed relevant to clinical work is stored in order to support the delivery of safe and effective psychological therapy. As a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered Psychologist, Dr Rachel M Allan is required to keep records of clinical practice.

Feedback is collected to improve and refine existing services. Anonymised client feedback may be used for marketing and promotional purposes. Permission is sought from the client prior to feedback being shared in this way. Permission for the anonymous sharing of client feedback can be withdrawn by the client at any point. Client feedback will not be shared without their permission. Clients are under no obligation to provide feedback.

3. Data storage

All client information is held in password-protected documents, stored in secure cloud storage (Tresorit) and accessible only through password protected devices to which only Dr Rachel M Allan has access. Any client information held in hard copy (e.g. signed contract or completed feedback sheet) is held in a locked file box. Any written notes made during sessions are either handed to the client for their use, or shredded following the therapy session.

Client mobile numbers may be stored in a device which is the property of Dr Rachel M Allan. This device is passcode protected. Client numbers will be saved under initials only, and will be deleted at the end of therapy.

In the event of information relating to a client being provided by a third party (e.g. if referred by another professional) only information pertinent to assessment and therapy will be kept. This information will be password protected and stored on an encrypted system. Clients are made aware that this information is held, and that they have the right to access it.

During the first session, clients are informed about how their personal information is handled. Details about the handling and storage of personal information are included in the client contract. Clients are advised to refer to this document to access the full and detailed Privacy Policy for Dr Rachel M Allan.

Clients are advised that they may request to access their personal information at any time. Clients requesting to access the information held about them will be provided access within one month of the request being made in writing. There is no charge for information access.

GDRP legislation states that individuals have the right to be 'forgotten' i.e. for their information to be erased should they request that. However, Dr Rachel M Allan is a Practitioner Psychologist and registrant of the HCPC, and information gathered for the purposes of psychological assessment and treatment form part of a client's health record. HCPC guidelines require practitioners to store health records for 7 years.

Records are held for seven years from the completion of therapy or supervision. Records are destroyed at the end of the calendar year once seven years have expired.

In the event of a data breach, the ICO will be notified. Clients will be notified within 72 hours in the event of a data breach where their information has been compromised.

Dr Rachel M Allan receives clinical supervision where clinical work is discussed. All client information is anonymised and supervision is protected by a confidentiality agreement.

Dr Rachel M Allan has appointed another Registered Psychologist who would act on her behalf to notify her clients in the event of Dr Rachel M Allan becoming ill, seriously injured or otherwise indisposed, or in the event of the death of Dr Rachel M Allan. Client names and contact details are shared with this individual for this purpose. No clinical information is shared. This arrangement is bound by a confidentiality agreement, and exists within the confines of professional practice guidelines and GDPR regulations. Clients may notify Dr Rachel M Allan if they wish to opt out of having their details shared as part of this arrangement.

Dr Rachel M Allan may speak in general terms about professional activities and experience when delivering training and in other professional contexts. Any information provided in these contexts is general, and does not relate to one specific client case or clinical event.

4. Information Sharing

The information provided by clients to Dr Rachel M Allan is confidential, however there are limits to confidentiality. This is in keeping with HCPC Professional Practice Guidelines.

Some client personal information may be shared in exceptional circumstances:

- When the information concerns risk of harm to the client, risk of harm to Dr Rachel M Allan, another adult, or a child.
- When information is pertinent to treatment being delivered by another health provider, such as the client's GP.
- In the event of a court order to share information.

If the client wishes to use an insurance policy to cover the cost of sessions, Dr Rachel M Allan will contact the insurance provider to verify the policy and will notify the insurance provider of work completed, referencing policy details provided by the client. Dates of therapy sessions and a record of attendance will be provided to the insurer in order to request payment for services. Similarly, if therapy costs are covered by a third party individual or organisation, dates of sessions may need to be provided by Dr Rachel M Allan for invoicing purposes.

Client requests for written reports or other evidence of therapy will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In the event of such documentation being provided, it will be sent by e-mail in a password protected document, in hard copy format handed to the client in person, or posted using Recorded Delivery. The mode of delivery will be mutually agreed between the client and Dr Rachel M Allan.

5. Use of Cookies

6. Other Websites

The website of Dr Rachel M Allan contains links to other websites. Dr Rachel M Allan has no control over destination websites and is not responsible for the protection and privacy of information provided to destination websites by website users. Dr Rachel M Allan advises that website users consult the privacy policies applicable prior to providing information to any linked website.

7. Social Media Accounts

Dr Rachel M Allan maintains a public profile on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The purpose and nature of use of social media by Dr Rachel M Allan is detailed in a separate Media Policy available **here**.

Dr Rachel M Allan strongly recommends that those wishing to enquire about or engage professional psychology services provided by Dr Rachel M Allan do not make an enquiry through the social media accounts of Dr Rachel M Allan, as privacy cannot be guaranteed and social media inboxes are not routinely checked.

Dr Rachel M Allan requests that all enquiries and contact pertaining to professional services is done through the contact form at www.rachelallanconsultancy.com or via e-mail at info@rachelallanconsultancy.com.

Dr Rachel M Allan welcomes any queries, comments or requests about this policy, which can be sent to info@rachelallanconsultancy.com