



Privacy statement.

As a business owner, I **Maria Houston-Moore** (data controller) of **Acorn Counselling Cheshire** understand how important your privacy is and that you are concerned with how and why your personal data is used.

I pledge to respect and value the privacy of all my enquiries and clients and will only collect and use personal data in ways that are described here, and in a way that is consistent with my obligations and your rights under the GDPR law.

Please read this privacy notice carefully and ensure that you understand it. Your acceptance of this privacy notice is deemed to occur upon your first use of my website. If you do not accept and agree with this privacy notice, you must stop using this website immediately.

Acorn Counselling Cheshire will never sell your data to any person or business – anyone at all, and never share or forward your data to anyone, apart from when requested by law or, if explicitly requested to by you (see below).

This privacy information explains how I use your personal data, how it is collected, how it is held, and how it is processed. It also explains your rights under the law relating to your personal data.

Personal data is defined by the General Data Protection Regulation as *'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified in particular by reference to an identifier'*.

Personal data is any information about you that enables you to be identified. Personal data covers information such as your name and contact details, but it also covers less obvious information such as, electronic location data, and other online identifiers.

Under GDPR, you have the following rights, which I will always work to uphold:

- *The right to be informed about the collection and use of your personal data.
- *The right to access the personal data we hold about you (submit a subject access request).
- *The right to have your personal data rectified if any of your personal data held by us is inaccurate or incomplete.
- *The right for all your records and information to be deleted.
- *The right to restrict the processing of your personal data.
- *The right to object to me using your personal data for a particular purpose or purposes.
- *The right to data portability. This means that, if you have provided personal data to us directly, I am using it with your consent or for the performance of a contract, and that data is processed using automated means, you can ask me for a copy of that personal data to re-use with another service or business in many cases.

For more information about the use of your personal data or exercising your rights as outlined above, please [get in touch](#).

Further information about your rights can also be obtained from the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) or your local [Citizens Advice](#).

If you have any cause for complaint about my use of your personal data, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (see above link).

What Personal Data do you collect:

If you decide to make direct contact through my website, or via email/text – I may collect:
Your name, email address, phone number, reason for contact.
(Depending on what you supply and which method you choose to make contact).

*Please note, there is also a Google Analytics tracker on the website which tracks figures on my website traffic and activates the use of Google maps. You can opt in or out of this, and there is more information about this on my website settings, and here: [Privacy policy](#). [Cookies](#).

If after an initial consultation, you wish to go ahead with booking a counselling session, I ask for: Your full residential address, next of kin or GP details AND explicit permission / consent for me to contact an emergency contact. If required.

*See counselling agreement for further information about notes and sensitive data – only applicable for those booking a counselling session, not for those only perusing / enquiring.

How do you use my Personal Data:

Under GDPR, I must always have a lawful basis for using personal data. This may be because the data is necessary for performing my role, because you have consented to our use of your personal data, or because it is in our legitimate business interests to use it.

When you visit <https://www.acorncounsellingcheshire.co.uk> your personal data will be used for the following purposes:

- *To improve your experience on my website
- *To improve the performance of my website

I use a business Instagram page [@acorncounsellingcheshire](#), which is a public page and viewable by anyone. You are welcome to 'follow' me, but please be aware any comments or 'likes' will be seen by anyone viewing my page. I will not follow any personal pages back or view your personal page. I can, with your permission – follow your business page, after we have ceased working together and if I can be sure this is ethical and not a dual relationship. Please do consider your own privacy settings and see [Instagram for further details](#).

You will not be sent any unlawful marketing or spam. I will always work to fully protect your rights and comply with our obligations under the GDPR and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, and you will always be able to opt out.

I do not use any automated systems for bookings, mailing lists or subscriptions and you will not be sent unsolicited contacts. I will have no need to make any further contact with you once our therapeutic counselling relationship has ended / you have not taken services.

How long will you keep my Personal Data:

I will not keep your personal data for any longer than is necessary.

*When you visit my website a small file called a cookie is placed on your browser which helps me to improve your experience and my website performance. These cookies are deleted after 30-days from your last visit, or sooner – if wiped on your device. You can learn [more about cookies here](#) (ICO) and here [lonos \(website host/domain/email provider\)](#).

*When you visit my website and contact me via my contact form, your emails will be stored for no longer than six months and deleted if services not taken.

*When you enter into a contract/counselling agreement – your personal data will be kept for 5-years from date of termination of contract, or earlier – if requested by you.

Do you share my Personal Data:

I will not share your personal information with anyone. Your details are safe with me and will remain confidential.

*If you share information which meets certain legal thresholds, such as: child protection, safeguarding, money laundering, threat to harm/kill, radicalisation etc – this information must be shared to protect yourself and/or others. Further information about this is explained on the counselling agreement, should you become my client.

How can I access my Personal Data:

If you want to know what personal data I hold, please submit your request in writing via a 'subject access request'.

Updates:

I may change this privacy notice from time to time. This may be necessary, for example, if the law changes, or if I change my business in a way that affects personal data protection.

Any changes will be made available on this page in writing.

This Privacy Notice was last updated August 2023.

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