



Online Counselling Sessions Policy

Business Name: Guided by... Adelle

Practitioner: Adelle Northall

Professional Membership: Registered Member of the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPS)

Role: Counsellor

Effective Date: 13 July 2026

Review Date: 13 July 2027

1. Purpose of this Policy

Guided by... Adelle provides counselling services through secure online video platforms where appropriate.

This policy explains the arrangements, expectations and responsibilities for online counselling sessions to ensure they are delivered safely, ethically and professionally.

This policy applies to:

- Adults.
- Children and young people.
- Private clients.
- Clients referred through schools and organisations.
- Online video counselling sessions.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Support safe and effective online counselling.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries.
- Explain responsibilities before, during and after online sessions.
- Address safeguarding, privacy and technical considerations.

2. Suitability for Online Counselling

Online counselling may be suitable for clients who:

- Have access to appropriate technology.
- Can access a private and safe space.
- Are comfortable engaging remotely.
- Can participate safely within agreed arrangements.

Before online counselling begins, suitability will be considered, including:

- The client's needs.
- Risk factors.
- Safeguarding considerations.
- Accessibility requirements.
- The client's ability to engage safely online.

Guided by... Adelle reserves the right to recommend an alternative form of support where online counselling is not considered appropriate.

3. Technology and Online Platforms

Guided by... Adelle will use appropriate online platforms to support confidential counselling.

Clients are responsible for:

- Ensuring they have suitable internet access.
- Using an appropriate device where possible.
- Checking their equipment before sessions.
- Informing the counsellor of any technical difficulties.

While reasonable steps will be taken to support secure online working, no digital platform can guarantee complete security.

4. Client Responsibilities

To support safe and effective online counselling, clients agree to:

- Attend sessions from a private and appropriate environment.
- Avoid being overheard wherever possible.
- Not record sessions without prior agreement.
- Maintain respectful communication.

- Inform Guided by... Adelle if their circumstances change.
- Provide accurate emergency contact information where required.
- Ensure they are in a suitable location for counselling.

For children and young people, additional arrangements regarding privacy, parental/carer involvement and safeguarding will be agreed before sessions begin.

5. Confidentiality and Privacy

Online counselling is subject to the same confidentiality standards as face-to-face counselling.

Guided by... Adelle will:

- Maintain client confidentiality.
 - Protect personal information in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
 - Keep appropriate professional records.
 - Discuss confidentiality limits before counselling begins.
- Confidentiality may be broken where:
- There is a safeguarding concern.
 - There is a serious risk of harm to the client or another person.
 - Disclosure is required by law.
 - Information sharing is necessary to protect someone from serious harm.

Further information is available in the Confidentiality Policy and Privacy Policy.

6. Safeguarding During Online Sessions

Safeguarding responsibilities apply equally to online counselling.

Before online counselling begins, Guided by... Adelle may confirm:

- The client's identity.
- Emergency contact details.
- The client's location during sessions.
- Relevant safeguarding arrangements.

During online sessions:

- Concerns about safety, abuse, neglect, self-harm or risk of harm will be responded to appropriately.
- Emergency procedures may be followed if immediate risk is identified.

- Relevant safeguarding agencies or emergency services may be contacted where necessary.

For children and young people, safeguarding arrangements will be agreed with parents, carers, schools or organisations where appropriate.

7. Emergency Procedures

If an emergency occurs during an online session:

Guided by... Adelle may:

- Attempt to communicate with the client.
 - Contact the client's emergency contact.
 - Contact emergency services.
- Share relevant information where necessary to protect the client or another person.

Clients should ensure that Guided by... Adelle has accurate emergency contact information where this is required.

8. Privacy and Environment

Clients should make reasonable efforts to attend sessions:

- From a private space.
 - Where they feel safe.
 - Without interruptions.
- Using headphones where appropriate.

Clients should consider:

- Who may be able to hear the session.
 - Whether others can see the screen.
- Whether the location allows confidential discussion.

Guided by... Adelle will also take reasonable steps to ensure sessions are conducted from an appropriate confidential environment.

9. Communication Between Sessions

Online counselling does not provide emergency support outside agreed sessions.

Communication outside sessions should normally be limited to:

- Appointment arrangements.
- Practical matters.

- Administrative information.

Clients should not use email or messaging for urgent emotional support or crisis situations.

In an emergency, clients should contact appropriate emergency or crisis services.

10. Recording of Sessions

Online counselling sessions must not be recorded by either party without prior discussion and explicit agreement.

Recording sessions without consent may breach confidentiality and professional boundaries.

11. Technical Problems

Occasionally technical difficulties may occur.

If a connection problem occurs:

- Reasonable attempts will be made to reconnect.
- Alternative arrangements may be agreed.
- The session may be rearranged where necessary.

Technical difficulties will not normally constitute a replacement session unless agreed.

12. Working with Schools and Organisations

Where online counselling is provided through a school or organisation:

- Referral and consent arrangements will be agreed before sessions begin.
 - Safeguarding procedures will be followed.
 - Confidentiality arrangements will be explained.
 - Communication expectations will be agreed.
- The organisation's safeguarding procedures will be followed alongside Guided by... Adelle's professional responsibilities.

13. Accessibility

Guided by... Adelle aims to make online counselling accessible wherever possible.

Clients are encouraged to discuss:

- Accessibility needs.
- Communication preferences.

- Technology barriers.
- Any adjustments that may support engagement.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where possible.

14. Ending Online Counselling

Online counselling may end when:

- Agreed sessions are complete.
- Therapeutic goals have been met.
- Another form of support is more appropriate.
- Online counselling is no longer suitable.
- Professional boundaries cannot be maintained.

Where possible, endings will be discussed and managed appropriately.

15. Policy Review

This Online Counselling Sessions Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Technology changes.
- Professional guidance changes.
- Legislation changes.
- Working practices develop.

Policy Approval

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Signature: Adelle Northall

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