

Th Platypus Counselling

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Policy Owner: Rylan (Rachael) Guthrie

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, ensuring a safe, ethical, and competent practice that protects clients from harm. It applies to all clients, including vulnerable adults and young people, seen in person or online.

2. Commitment to Clients

Ethical Framework: I adhere to the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (2018).

Paramountcy: The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

Dignity: I will act to protect clients from neglect and physical, sexual, psychological, financial, or discriminatory abuse.

3. Defining Safeguarding

Vulnerable Adults: Adults at risk of harm due to their circumstances or needs, including mental health issues, learning disabilities, or physical frailty.

Children/Young People: Any person under the age of 18.

Types of Harm: Including physical, psychological, sexual, financial, material, discriminatory, or neglect, or any other infringement of an individual's rights.

4. Procedures for Action (4 R's)

Recognise: I will remain vigilant for signs of abuse or risks of harm to the client or others.

Respond: If I have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse, I will address this with the client, where appropriate, unless doing so would increase the risk.

Record: I will maintain accurate, confidential, and secure notes (GDPR compliant) regarding any concerns, including dates, facts, and actions taken.

Report/Refer: If necessary, I will report concerns to relevant authorities (e.g., Local Authority Children's/Adult Services, Police) in accordance with local legal frameworks.

5. Confidentiality and Risk

Breaching Confidentiality: While I respect client confidentiality, the BACP Ethical Framework permits breaching confidentiality to prevent serious harm to the client or others, or to ensure legal compliance.

Proportionality: I will use the minimum necessary disclosure to safeguard the individual.

Supervision: All safeguarding concerns will be discussed in clinical supervision.

Online counselling sessions are conducted using secure, GDPR-compliant platforms.

Clients are informed of the potential risks associated with digital communication, including issues related to internet security. The counsellor works from a private and confidential space and encourages clients to do the same.

6. Safe Practice

Risk Assessment: I will assess risks in my practice.

DBS Check: Pending as self-employed, current PVG with Centred Scotland.

Training: I will maintain up-to-date CPD regarding safeguarding.

7. Contact Details for Referrals

Local Authority Adult Social Care: Highland - 01349 886 606

Local Authority Children's Services: 0808 175 3646

Police (Non-emergency/Emergency): 101 / 999

NSPCC (Children): 0808 800 5000

Additional Crisis hotlines can be accessed by online search or on the website

thplatypus.com

8. Client Location and Emergency Procedures

Before commencing online counselling, there must be a copy client's current address and an emergency contact on file. Clients will be asked to confirm their location at the start of online sessions. In the event of an immediate safeguarding concern or risk of harm, the counsellor may contact emergency services or the nominated emergency contact, where necessary and appropriate.

9. Client Environment and Privacy

The counsellor acknowledges that it is not always possible to control the client's environment during online sessions. Clients are encouraged to ensure they are in a private and safe space where they cannot be overheard or interrupted. Where concerns arise about privacy or safety, these will be addressed as part of ongoing safeguarding considerations.

10. Professional Boundaries and Communication

Clear boundaries are maintained in online work. Communication with clients takes place only via agreed professional channels and platforms. Social media and informal messaging platforms are not used for therapeutic communication. Any safeguarding

concerns raised during online contact will be responded to in line with this safeguarding policy.

11. Recording of Sessions and Records

Online counselling sessions are not recorded. Client records, including safeguarding-related information, are stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation.

12. Concerns

Any further questions or concerns related to safeguarding procedures, please feel free to reach out via email to Rylan Guthrie th.platypusphotography@gmail.com.