**Privacy Policy for Heather Rees Counselling**

Effective Date: 31 July 2025

At **Heather Rees Counselling** ("we", "us", "our"), we are committed to protecting your privacy and handling your personal information with transparency and care. This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, and protect the information you provide when you engage with our counselling services, whether online, by telephone, or in person.

1. **Information We Collect**

We may collect the following types of information:

**Personal Identifying Information**:

Your name, contact details (email address, phone number), date of birth, emergency contact information.

**Sensitive Personal Data** (Special Category Data):

Information related to your mental health, wellbeing, medical history, or any details you share during counselling sessions.

**Website Usage Data**:

IP addresses, browser type, time zone, and browsing activity on our website (for security and analytics purposes).

**Cookies and Tracking Technologies**:

Basic cookies may be used for website functionality. We do not use tracking cookies for advertising purposes.

2. **How We Use Your Information**

We use your personal information for the following purposes:

\* To provide counselling services and communicate with you.

\* To manage appointments and billing.

\* To respond to your enquiries or requests.

\* To comply with legal or professional obligations (e.g., safeguarding, supervision requirements).

\* For legitimate interests such as ensuring service quality and managing business operations.

3. **Lawful Basis for Processing**

We process your data based on the following lawful grounds:

**Consent** – when you agree to engage in counselling services.

**Contractual necessity** – to deliver our counselling services.

**Legal obligation** – when required by law (e.g., safeguarding).

**Legitimate interests** – for operational purposes not overridden by your rights.

4. **Data Security and Confidentiality**

Your information is stored securely and handled in strict confidence. We take reasonable steps to protect your data from loss, misuse, or unauthorized access. Sensitive notes are stored securely and separately from personal identifiers where applicable.

5. **Sharing Your Information**

We do **not** share your personal data with third parties for marketing. We may share information only:

With professional supervisors (anonymously, as per ethical practice).

If required by law or to protect you or others from harm.

With your explicit consent.

6. **Data Retention**

We retain counselling records for up to **7 years** after your last session in line with professional guidelines. After this period, data will be securely destroyed.

7. **Your Rights Under Data Protection Law**

You have the right to:

\* Access the personal data we hold about you.

\* Request correction of inaccurate data.

\* Request deletion of your data, where appropriate.

\* Withdraw consent at any time.

\* Object to or restrict certain types of processing.

\* Lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).

8. **Changes to This Policy**

We may update this Privacy Policy from time to time. Significant changes will be communicated directly where appropriate. The latest version will always be available on our website.

9. **Contact Information**

If you have any questions about this Privacy Policy or your personal data, please contact:

**Heather Rees Counselling**

Email: info@heatherreescounselling.co.uk

Phone: 07754157470

Website: <https://www.heatherreescounselling.co.uk/>

10. **Supervisory Authority Contact**

If you wish to raise a concern, you can contact the **Information Commissioner’s Office** (ICO):

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Phone: 0303 123 1113