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## *Policy on releasing client notes to a client or a third party*

### **General principles**

Notes made of counselling sessions are the property of The Well and are kept in a secure location either online or as paper copies.

### **Client access to their counselling notes**

- Once counselling has been completed your notes will be held securely for 7 years. There are some reasons we may keep notes longer, if this applies to you, your counsellor will discuss this with you on an individual basis.
- If you would like a copy of your notes you need to make a request in writing either by emailing [info@thewellcounselling.co.uk](mailto:info@thewellcounselling.co.uk) or by writing to us at: The Well, 6 Church Street, Great Malvern, WR14 2AY
- Your notes may contain a lot of information about you, we will therefore usually ask for photographic identification such as a passport or driving licence, if you do not have either please let us know and we will work with you to identify an alternative.
- We will release the notes within calendar month if we have been able to verify your identity within this time.
- We will send you a printout of your notes or arrange for you to collect them.

### **Third party access to a client's notes**

If a third party, such as the police, social workers or a member of a Mental Health Team request a copy of your notes whether you are a current client or a previous client this request must be made in writing to the Head of Counselling. The Head(s) of Counselling will then contact you to get written permission. The Head(s) of Counselling will let you know the name and job title of the person requesting notes and the reason for the request. We would recommend you review your notes before deciding to release them to a third party. If you decide to give us permission to release your notes, we will check your identification and we will then send the notes to the person making the request in an envelope marked "Strictly confidential".

If you decide not to give permission or we cannot make contact with you, your notes will not be released unless we receive a warrant issued by a judge.

The police do not have the right to access therapeutic records without a warrant issued by a judge. If we were to receive such a request in writing, we would need to send copies of the notes as requested.

### **Couples counselling (if applicable)**

Both you and your partner are part of the contract, if only one of you wants a copy of the notes, you can only ask for the parts relating to you, unless your partner consents. If one partner, does not consent, all information relating to them must be redacted.

### **Further information**

The ICO gives independent advice and guidance about data protection and freedom of information.

You can contact the ICO helpline on 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745 from between 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday.

You can also find further information on their website:

[For the public | ICO](#)