

Privacy Policy Statement

1. Introduction

RFA must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 when using and storing personal data. RFA seeks permission for the use of personal data, including sensitive personal data to provide counselling and associated services and to meet the legitimate interests of the organisation.

RFA is committed to protecting the privacy of our clients, counsellors, contractors, donors, volunteers and staff. This policy applies to personal data collected and stored on behalf of RFA. Our self-employed counsellors are expected to abide by similar standards.

2. What information do we collect?

- Counselling requests: registering an interest in our counselling service can be done online, on paper or in person. We will ask for and store your name, address, telephone number and email address. We may also request information on your availability, therapeutic issues and other details that we deem relevant to processing your request.
- Counselling Assessment: RFA may ask you about current personal, social, medical and financial circumstances. We may also ask you about your background and family history, as well as the issues which are affecting you now, contact details of family members, professionals and carers involved with you and how much information you would want shared with them. RFA may require this information to allocate a counsellor to you and to manage the service we provide to you. Your RFA counsellor, who will usually be self-employed, a student or volunteer will require and hold similar information and we require their privacy and data protection standards to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Self-employed Counsellors, Volunteers, Trustees, Contractors, Employees and others providing services to RFA: We will use an application form and interview to gather information about your background, qualifications and experience, and professional memberships. We also ask for your name, address, telephone number, email address and the address and telephone number of referees and people we may need to contact for you in an emergency. This information is processed for the purposes of considering your application, taking up services and administering your role in RFA..
- Donors: the information you give us when making a donation to RFA may include your name, postal address, email address, phone number, the amount donated, Gift Aid status and messages.
- Supporters and referrers: We will record contact details in order to keep in touch and your preferences for information from RFA.

3. What do we use your information for?

We use information held about you in the following ways:

- To provide clients with the professional, specialist counselling service requested from RFA and other forms of support, and advocacy
- To enable RFA to offer appropriate opportunities and support to counsellors, volunteers and consultants including professional development.
- To offer suitable counselling appointments, and to allocate clients and counsellors.
- To notify you of changes to appointments and other changes to our services.
- To seek feedback from you on your experience of counselling with RFA.
- To improve our service to ensure that it is provided in the most effective manner for you and for us.
- To administer the service, including the arrangement of appointments, the handling of donations, and for financial control, data analysis, research, statistical and survey purposes.
- To provide information on and fund-raise for RFA (where consent has been obtained for this)
- To fulfil our administrative, legal and contractual obligations as a service provider
- Administration of complaints processes: The administration of complaint and grievance processes.

4. What information do we share?

We will not share any information about you with other organisations or people without your consent except in the following situations:

Serious harm: RFA may legally share your information with the relevant authorities if we have reason to believe that this may prevent serious harm being caused to you or another person but we will always seek your consent before doing so and only share information without your consenting in very exceptional situations as covered in our Safeguarding Policy

Compliance with law: RFA may share your information where we are required to by law or by the regulations and other rules to which we are subject. We will aim to let you know if this happening. We will seek legal advice before sharing information requested by police, courts etc

Where an external organization requires basic personal data to provide a service as part of the organization of RFA eg for payment purposes or IT services

5. How do we keep your information safe?

All information you provide to us is stored as securely as possible. All paper forms and correspondence are kept securely in locked cabinets. Access to electronic records requires password-protected authentication.

Unfortunately, the transmission of information via the internet is never completely secure. Although we will do our best to protect your information using industry-standard protocols and encryption, we cannot guarantee the security of your data transmitted to us via email, including forms completed on our website which are transmitted by email: any transmission is at your own risk. Once we have retrieved your information, we will use strict procedures and security features to try to prevent unauthorised access.

Your identifiable personal information is kept separately from any session notes and other descriptive material. Client notes and other documentation are destroyed two years after the end of counselling or 5 years where there is a safeguarding issue. Gift Aid declarations are destroyed/deleted after seven years, and personal contact details are destroyed/deleted after two years of no contact or updates. Counsellors should let you know their own privacy procedures; they may keep their notes different lengths of time.

6. Your rights

You have the right to ask us to provide a copy of the information held by us in our records. You also have the right to require us to correct any inaccuracies in your information. If you would like to do this, please contact us via your counsellor, or RFA's phone number, address or email.

You may withdraw your consent for us to hold and process your data at any time. However, if you do this while actively receiving counselling through RFA, your counselling might have to end. You can withdraw your consent by contacting us via your counsellor, or RFA's phone number, address or email.

7. Changes to this policy

We will review this policy and may make changes to it from time to time. If we make any substantial changes, we will notify you by posting a prominent announcement on our website.

See also:

Safeguarding Policy

Counsellors Service Guide

Contractors Service Guide

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