Safeguarding Policy

Destination Counselling

Policy owner: Jane Brown, Counsellor | BACP membership number: 408149

Policy for practice use | Prepared 30 October 2026 | Next review due: 30 October 2027

1. Purpose and commitment

Destination Counselling is committed to responding carefully and promptly to concerns about abuse, neglect or risk of harm involving children, young people and adults at risk. This policy explains how I listen to concerns, consider safety, record decisions, and seek advice or share information when appropriate. I will treat people with dignity, consider their wishes and circumstances, work collaboratively wherever possible, and explain confidentiality limits before counselling begins. I will not promise absolute confidentiality.

2. Scope

This policy applies to my counselling work with individual clients and couples, all aged 18 or over and physically located in the UK during sessions. I do not provide counselling to anyone under 18 or to clients located outside the UK. It also covers concerns an adult client may raise about a child, young person, another adult at risk, or an immediate serious risk of harm, including during online sessions using Zoom. This policy does not make counselling an emergency service.

Definitions and referral procedures vary across the UK. I will use the local procedures for the area where the client is located.

3. Safeguarding contact and referral routes

Jane Brown is the counsellor and safeguarding contact for Destination Counselling. I may consult my supervisor, using anonymised information where practical. I will share identifiable information only with consent or where there is a lawful or ethically recognised basis.

Jane Brown, Counsellor | destinationcounselling@outlook.com | 07417 424379 (phone, text or WhatsApp)

England: Find the relevant council and adult safeguarding team at https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council. For child concerns, see https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council.

- Scotland: Contact local authority social work; council contacts are listed at https://www.socialwork.gov.scot/concerns-about-someones-safety.
- Wales: Local authority social services; child and adult routes: https://www.gov.wales/report-suspected-abuse-neglect-or-harm-child-or-young-person and https://www.gov.wales/report-safeguarding-concern-about-person-aged-over-18-years.
- Northern Ireland: Contact the relevant HSC Trust Gateway Service for children or Adult Protection Gateway Team for adults; contacts: https://www.online.hscni.net/access-health-social-care. Police non-emergency: 101. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999.

If a client has a concern about my conduct or cannot raise it with me, they may contact BACP's Get help with counselling concerns: https://www.bacp.co.uk/gethelp, or BACP's Professional Conduct Procedure: https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/. These routes do not replace emergency or statutory safeguarding referrals.

4. Recognising and receiving a concern

A concern may arise from something a client says, something I observe, information from another person, or a change that causes me to worry about safety. Concerns may involve abuse, neglect, exploitation, coercive or controlling behaviour, domestic abuse, self-neglect, or serious risk of harm. A concern need not be proven before I seek advice or consider a referral. I will listen calmly, take it seriously, avoid promising secrecy, and ask only what is needed to understand immediate safety and next steps. I will not investigate or confront a person alleged to have caused harm.

5. Responding to concerns

Immediate danger or urgent medical need

If I believe someone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical assistance, I will take reasonable steps to get help without delay. This may include calling 999 or asking the client to do so, confirming their current location during an online session, and sharing the minimum information necessary with emergency services. I will explain what I am doing when safe and appropriate.

Other concerns

I will discuss the concern with the person affected where possible, consider their wishes and safety, and explain next steps. I may consult my supervisor and, where appropriate, the local safeguarding service or police. For children and young people I will follow local children's social care / MASH procedures; for adults at risk I will use the local adult safeguarding pathway and consider their wishes, wellbeing and ability to protect themselves.

I will seek consent before sharing information where appropriate. I may share without consent where required or permitted by law, or where necessary to address an immediate serious risk or protect a child or another person from serious harm. I will share only what is necessary and normally tell the person what I shared and why, unless doing so could increase risk or is otherwise inappropriate.

Couples work

I will consider the safety and confidentiality of each partner and any children or adults at risk who may be affected. Information in a joint session is generally part of the shared work. Before an individual session, we will discuss its confidentiality boundaries. A safeguarding concern may require sharing information with the other partner or an appropriate service; I may not be able to discuss this with the client first if doing so could increase risk.

Concerns about a practitioner

If a concern relates to my practice, I will consider immediate safety, seek appropriate professional advice, and use relevant BACP or statutory reporting procedures. If it relates to another professional, I will consider reporting to their employer, regulator, local authority or police, taking account of risk, the person's wishes and legal duties.

6. Online-session safety

Sessions are held online using Zoom and are not recorded. Before online work begins, I will agree how we will contact each other if the connection fails. At the start of each online session, I will confirm that the client is physically in the UK and ask for their current local authority or Trust area and a callback number. If an urgent safety concern arises, I may ask for their precise location so I can

contact the appropriate emergency or safeguarding service. I handle this information as described in my privacy notice. Clients are encouraged to join from a private space and use a device and internet connection others cannot access.

7. Recording and storing information

I will make a timely, factual record of a concern and actions taken, including the date and source; the person's words where possible; immediate safety considerations and wishes; advice sought; decisions and reasons; consent or basis for disclosure; information shared; and agreed follow-up. I will distinguish fact from opinion.

Safeguarding records are stored securely with counselling records and accessed only when needed for the work or a lawful professional purpose. Records are kept for five years after our work ends, then securely destroyed unless particular information must be retained longer to meet a legal obligation or resolve a claim. My privacy notice explains how personal information is collected, used, stored and protected, who may access it, how long it is kept, and what rights clients have. Clients may request a copy by emailing destinationcounselling@outlook.com or calling 07417 424379.

8. Training and review

I will keep my knowledge of safeguarding law, local referral routes and professional guidance up to date. I will use supervision to reflect on safeguarding decisions and seek advice from appropriate statutory services where needed. I will review this policy at least annually and after a significant incident, change in law or guidance, or change in my services.

9. Access to this policy

Clients may request a copy from Jane Brown at destinationcounselling@outlook.com or 07417 424379. I will provide the policy and relevant contact details in an accessible format where reasonably possible.

10. Guidance and further information

- BACP safeguarding guidance: https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/safeguarding-and-protecting-people/
- BACP Ethical Framework 2026: https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/26718/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions-2026.pdf
- Working together to safeguard children 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
- Care and support statutory guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance