

Data Retention Policy

Last updated: 26 June 2026

Di Barry Counselling

This policy explains how long I keep your personal information, why I keep it, and what happens to it afterwards. I have written this in plain English so you can understand exactly how your data is handled.

Why I Retain Your Data

I keep records of our work together for several important reasons:

Legal obligations — UK law requires me to keep certain records, particularly financial records for tax purposes

Professional standards — As a counsellor in private practice, I am expected to maintain accurate records of the therapeutic work I undertake

Insurance requirements — My professional indemnity insurance requires me to retain records in case a concern or claim arises after therapy has ended

Your protection and mine — Records provide an accurate account of our work together, which protects both of us

Continuity of care — If you return to therapy in the future, having access to previous records can support our work together

Retention Periods

The table below shows how long I keep different types of information:

Type of Record	Retention Period	Reason
Client therapy records (adults)	7 years after our last session	In line with the Limitation Act 1980 and standard professional indemnity insurance requirements

Enquiry and contact data (non-clients)	12 months from last contact	Allows reasonable time to respond and follow up
Financial records and invoices	6 years from the end of the financial year	HMRC requirement
Insurance records	7 years	To support any potential insurance claims
Website contact form submissions	12 months	Unless you become a client, in which case the client retention period applies

What I Retain

The records I keep may include:

- Session notes — Brief records of our sessions, including themes discussed, observations, and any agreed actions
- Contact details — Your name, address, telephone number, and email address
- Therapy agreement — The signed contract between us setting out how we will work together
- Assessment information — Any initial assessment notes, questionnaires, or forms you completed
- Correspondence — Emails, text messages, or letters relating to your therapy
- Payment records — Invoices and records of payments received
- Emergency contact details — Information about who to contact in an emergency, and your GP details if you have provided them

How Your Data Is Stored

I take the security of your information seriously:

Electronic records are held on password-protected devices. Access is restricted to me.

Paper records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure room. Only I have access to this cabinet.

I do not store your data in a way that allows anyone else to access it without my knowledge, except in the limited circumstances described in my Privacy Policy.

Who Has Access to Your Data

Beyond myself, the following parties may have limited access to your information:

My clinical supervisor — I discuss my client work in supervision to maintain good practice, but I only share your first name in case material. Identifying details are not disclosed.

External IT support — May have incidental access to electronic systems during maintenance, but they are bound by confidentiality.

An external accountant or bookkeeper — Has access to invoice data only for the purpose of managing my accounts.

Your Right to Erasure

Under UK GDPR, you have the right to request that I delete your personal data. However, this right is not absolute. I may need to retain your records until the end of the applicable retention period where this is required by professional guidelines, insurance requirements, or law.

If you ask me to delete your data before the retention period has ended, I will explain clearly why I need to keep it and for how long. Once the retention period has passed, I will securely dispose of your records as described below.

Clinical Will Arrangements

I am currently putting arrangements in place to ensure your records are handled appropriately in the event of my unexpected death or incapacity. Once these arrangements are complete, I will inform you of the details.

Secure Disposal

At the end of the relevant retention period:

Paper records are securely destroyed

Electronic records are permanently deleted

I do not keep any personal data longer than necessary for the purposes described in this policy.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions about how long I keep your data, or if you wish to discuss your records, please contact me:

Email: dibarrycounselling@gmail.com

If you are unhappy with how I have handled your data, you can raise a complaint with me directly. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you believe your data protection rights have been breached.

My full complaints procedure and contact form are available at: <https://di-barry-counselling.co.uk/>

ICO Registration Number: ZB343923