



**Delta Therapy Ltd**  
**Counselling & Psychotherapy**  
**www.deltatherapy.co.uk**  
**info@deltatherapy.co.uk**

## **Counselling Contract (version 3.0) last updated 12/5/24**

*Contract between: Shirley Moore (Counsellor and Director of Delta Therapy Ltd.) and an individual client. This contract and the work to which it relates are subject to the (exclusive) jurisdiction of the laws of Scotland.*

Counselling involves the sharing of personal and confidential information with someone in a professional therapeutic role. It is important that clients trusting their personal information in this situation are confident that it will be protected according to ethical and legal principles and that their therapist has been suitably trained and is registered with a professional body who oversees their practice.

Please read this document carefully. The provision of counselling sessions assumes the continued acceptance of the terms contained within. Please ask me about anything that is unclear or that you are not sure about. I would be happy to accept feedback about the content or accessibility of this contract if you feel it could be improved. Please ask if you would prefer it in another format.

Please note that I am an independent practitioner in private practice. I have no connections with the NHS or other mental health services, therefore I am unable to provide emergency support for those in crisis or ad-hoc support outside scheduled counselling sessions. Please see below for suggestions for emergency support. If you are currently under the care of other mental health professionals, it is recommended that you discuss with them whether undertaking independent counselling with me could be helpful for you at this time.

### **Person-Centred Counselling**

I am trained in the Person-Centred Approach to Counselling. This means that I consider you an expert on you and I will not tell you what to do but offer you a non-judgemental space where you can explore the areas of your life which you choose to bring to our sessions. I may challenge some of your assumptions or perceptions on occasion, in order to deepen understanding and foster new insights. Where I have had

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further training in different areas of therapy, I may introduce this to our sessions but only to the extent that you find it helpful.

I also offer psychoeducation, which refers to the process of providing information and education to people receiving mental health services, in order to help them better understand and manage their mental health and any neurological differences or mental health conditions they may have. I will advise on my areas of experience, when it may be helpful, but I am always mindful that you are the expert on you.

I may offer you suggestions of resources for further support, but with no expectation that you use them. I welcome feedback and would encourage you to let me know what is and what is not working for you during our sessions so that you can get the most out of them. I will check in with you regularly to make sure that continuing with sessions is in your best interests.

Much of the therapeutic work happens outside of scheduled sessions as you process the thoughts and feelings that have come up for you. If you have invested the time and energy in attending therapy it is important that you factor in some “downtime” between sessions to enable this processing to occur.

I offer online counselling and email counselling. It would be usual to choose one way of working at a time, however it is also possible to move between online and email counselling should you wish, subject to availability.

### **Online Counselling**

I offer remote online counselling for adults. This takes place over a commercial video platform, which I will advise you of prior to any sessions. While I will endeavour to provide a safe and secure communication platform, I can take no responsibility for any failures from the software in this area. If you have a preference for a different video platform, I will happily accommodate that if it is available to me.

Sessions are around 50 minutes long (a therapeutic hour) and will usually take place weekly, but can be fortnightly if that works better for you. I will send you an appointment, usually via email, with a link to connect to the video platform at the scheduled time.

Counselling does involve commitment. Commitment to give yourself the time that you deserve to spend on yourself. For face-to-face counselling it would be usual to travel to and from an appointment and so there would be some processing time and some "downtime" factored in, perhaps even a coffee in a nice cafe. With online counselling that travel time may be lost, but the need for processing and “downtime” is still there, so it is important not to rush straight from one online work meeting to an online counselling session to another online work meeting for example.

Please ensure that you are in a quiet, private space where you will not be disturbed for the duration of our session. This space would ideally be one that you will not mind associating with counselling or any memories or difficult feelings it may bring up. You may wish to partition off a room or move a chair into a different location to create the illusion of going to the counselling space, which you can reverse at the end of the session when “returning home”. You may wish to have a box of tissues and a glass of water at hand.

Please put your phone on silent or turn it off. You will need to ensure that any vulnerable members of your household have adequate care and supervision for this time.

Counselling is for individuals only; no other person should be present in the room. I am not able to work with you if you are under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances at the time of our session. There is no requirement for you to “dress up” for the session, please wear whatever is comfortable for you. If you would be happy to answer the door to a stranger in it, then it should be fine!

Online counselling is different to face to face work as it can be difficult to pick up on non-verbal communication in the same way. Sometimes the connection may be unstable or lost for a few seconds. It is important for both of us to feel able to ask for clarification if we are unsure about something said and talk about any misunderstandings. Counselling can bring up painful memories and difficult feelings. The physical separation of online counselling can make this harder. It is OK to experience strong emotions in sessions, including anger. It would be rare for a client to be abusive, however in this unlikely situation I reserve the right to terminate the session if I perceive a threat to my wellbeing.

If there are any technical issues, either commencing or during a session, and we are unable to connect via the online platform, I will try and contact you via email, text or telephone. If you have put your phone on silent or turned it off for the session, please check it if there is a connection failure. If I message you, it will be from 07743 768083. You could also phone me on this number if we have connection problems. If I phone you, it will come up from a withheld number. If you have any technical issues immediately prior to our appointment, please email me on [shirleymoore@deltatherapy.co.uk](mailto:shirleymoore@deltatherapy.co.uk).

I have a small and friendly dog who usually sleeps at my feet during counselling sessions. Very occasionally she may bark or I may need to let her out of the room if there is a disturbance outside. If you would prefer me to keep the dog outside of the counselling room during our session, I would be happy to do this, just let me know. Your pets are very welcome to join you!

## **Email Counselling**

I offer asynchronous counselling via email. This way of working gives you more time to think about what you are communicating and can give a sense of anonymity which you may find helps you when writing about difficult topics. Sometime the act of writing out your thoughts alone will give you insight into your difficulties and some release. It can be particularly useful for those who may not be able to meet with a counsellor in regular hours or who prefer to express themselves in writing.

While email counselling can work very well, there are limitations. Misinterpretation of the written word (by both client and counsellor) may occur without the usual auditory and visual cues and, without the real-time support of your counsellor, you may feel more alone and less comforted when writing about difficult experiences. It may be frustrating to have to wait for a reply. Like with online counselling I advise some “downtime” following a session, for example some fresh air, gentle exercise, a beverage or a short nap!

The way email counselling works is that we will agree on a time frame of when you will email me by (for example midnight on Monday) and when I will respond (for example by 5pm on Thursday). Late emails will be treated as “non-attendance” (see Cancellation of Sessions and Non-Attendance) although I will be sympathetic to genuine emergencies. Should you struggle with time-management, we can discuss if setting up reminders would be helpful.

We will agree on a word limit for your emails and my responses, which would usually be 500 words (+/- 10%), excluding salutations and administrative information. This works well in practice, fitting in to the usual 50 minute therapy session. Different people have different approaches to writing. Some may find they write many more than 500 words and need to edit their writing to focus on what is most important to them at that time (in which case I recommend keeping the original drafts for your own reflections and future considerations) and some may struggle to reach 500 words. Some will prefer to write in one sitting and others in short bursts. Some will want to check for spelling and grammatical accuracy while others will want to write unconstrained by these rules. There is no right or wrong way to write. It is the content and willingness to use the time and space to explore areas of your life which you may not otherwise have the opportunity to do, that is most important. Please feel free to use common emojis or similar if you find them helpful to convey feelings. Should you exceed the word limit, I will read and respond to the first 500 words only.

Please be aware that technology fails occasionally and communication may be interrupted although I will do my utmost to maintain a consistent service. Very occasionally emails do not arrive as expected. If you do not receive an expected response please do let me know as soon as possible. If I do not hear from you as expected then I will make up to two attempts to contact you before closing your file.

I use ProtonMail which is an encrypted email service. This means that I am the only one that can see the content of my emails. Not even Proton can view the content of my emails and attachments. Popular email providers (e.g. Gmail, Outlook, and Yahoo) may use automation to scan the content of your emails to create a detailed profile on you which they may use to target adverts for example. You are free to use whatever email provider you prefer but I recommend you use one which is encrypted, like ProtonMail (which has a free basic plan). It is advisable not to leave your email auto signed-in to prevent unauthorised access. I also suggest you ensure you are in a private space while writing your emails so that no one may inadvertently or otherwise see what you are communicating.

Please keep yourself up to date with internet security and safety. The national Cyber Security Centre has advice: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online>.

### **Moving From Online to Email Counselling and Vice-Versa**

Situations change and you may wish to move between online and email counselling. I am happy to accommodate this if I have availability, following a discussion and agreement that it will continue to meet your needs. Combining online and email counselling may also be possible but will be on an individual basis and subject to further discussion and agreement.

## **Confidentiality**

I will keep your personal information confidential. The only time that I would break confidentiality is if I consider you at serious risk of causing harm to yourself or others or when I am compelled to do so by law. If I have to break your confidentiality, I will discuss this with you first, wherever possible. If I feel that you need emergency assistance at any point, I will request your permission to share some of your personal information with your GP or another healthcare professional.

I keep written notes on online sessions which are stored securely either on a purposely-designed clinical management system or in your personal folder in a cloud-based, encrypted file storage system. If I make any handwritten notes during our session, I will transfer these to the online system and then shred the paper copy. Notes will generally include the main focus of a session and anything to be revisited in the following session. Their primary purpose is as a memory jogger for me and a record to look back on to demonstrate where things have changed or not over time and perhaps pick up on patterns. I do not keep written process notes and these notes do not contain my personal opinions. You are welcome to see the notes I write about you.

For email counselling our emails will make up the majority of your personal record. If I make any additional notes, they will be stored as above for online counselling.

If you raise a concern with a third party relating to my practice, I may be required to share these records with them and with other involved parties, such as my insurer or professional body. Notes may be requested by third parties during legal processes but only shared with your permission, unless under a court order. Your executor or a coroner may request your notes after your death.

If I become seriously ill and am unable to contact you, I have a clinical will. This contains contact details for current clients. In this situation my next of kin will contact my trustees (who will be qualified counsellors abiding to an ethical code) and my supervisor to inform them of the situation and they will take on responsibility for communicating with you. They will have access to your contact details only, not your counselling records.

You are free to discuss your counselling sessions with anyone else if you find it helpful but I would kindly ask that you refrain from posting about them on social media sites as this can never be reversed.

Please see my privacy policy for more details about how I manage and store your personal information.

## **Supervision**

As part of my ongoing professional registration, I am required to undergo regular supervision. This is where I discuss my client work with suitably trained and experienced professionals, to ensure that I am working competently, safely and ethically. Any client work discussed in supervision sessions (which may be individual or group) is anonymised and focusses on my processes and way of working, rather than

detailed analysis of my clients. Anyone I work with in supervision will also be a member of a professional body, adhere to a code of ethics and be bound by the same rules of confidentiality as myself. I can provide you with my supervisor's name on request.

### **Number of Sessions & Payment**

The cost of these sessions will be agreed by us in advance. Fees are subject to annual review. Payment will be via bank transfer and I will provide you with my details.

For online sessions, payment must be made at least 24 hours in advance of each session, unless agreed in advance.

For email sessions, payment must be made at least 24 hours before the submission time of your written email, unless agreed in advance.

If I do not receive an expected payment by the end of the day before the session, I will send a reminder and my non-attendance policy will apply (See Cancellation of Sessions and Non-Attendance below)

Sessions would normally occur weekly, however fortnightly sessions are also possible or sessions at other intervals by agreement. The sessions would normally be on the same day and at the same time, however I will be as flexible as I can for those who have irregular shift patterns or find it hard for other reasons to commit to the same time each week.

There are no minimum or maximum number of sessions. You may end the counselling agreement at any time. I may invite you to attend a final session or email exchange in order to have a well-managed ending, although you are under no obligation to do so. I will review our work together with you regularly, in order to check that you are happy with the service provided, that you are benefitting from the sessions and if there is anything you would like to change or discuss.

If you feel that further sessions would be helpful at a later date, you are welcome to contact me again in the future to enquire about availability.

### **Cancellation of Sessions and Non-Attendance**

I would be grateful if you could inform me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a forthcoming session so we can reschedule.

If you cancel within 24 hours of a session or do not attend a booked session, or do not submit a booked email then that session will be charged or not refunded. I will be sympathetic to emergencies and in this situation may, at my discretion, credit any payment to your next session. If you arrive part-way through your online session, I will see you for the remainder of the session. The session will only be extended at my discretion and in limited circumstances and there will be no refund of fees paid.

If there are repeated missed appointments or late cancellations, it may be appropriate to end counselling or to take a break until your situation allows a regular commitment.

If I have to cancel or rearrange a session, I will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible. If you have already paid for the session, I will credit the payment to your next session or provide you with a refund.

### **Leave and Availability**

I take regular breaks in order to manage my energy levels and avoid burnout. Looking after myself helps me to help you. I also attend training courses and conferences to keep myself up to date and provide the best possible service. I will endeavour to give you as much notice of possible of my leave dates, particularly if it will mean we will miss more than one regular session.

I usually take an extended period of leave around the winter holiday period and in the summer holidays of around 4 weeks. I will give you as much notice of this as I can if it is likely to include a period of time when we are working together.

### **Refunds**

When you pay for a counselling session, you are paying for a service from a trained professional. While I hope that you will feel better after counselling, I cannot guarantee the outcome of any course of therapy and so I cannot offer a refund if the outcome of therapy did not meet your expectations or if you breach any part of our contract. A refund may be approved if I breach our contract or if there is problem on my end with the online platform or environmental factors (e.g. loud, external noise outside).

### **Referral**

Not all issues are suitable for online counselling. It may be that another form of support is more appropriate for you. If you or I feel that our counselling relationship is not working, or if we have identified that you require specific expertise that I cannot provide then we may have to discontinue our work together. I would refer you to alternative support wherever possible.

### **Contact Between Sessions**

Contact in between sessions should be limited to practical arrangements and administrative information only. Sensitive and personal material should be kept for the session itself, unless we have agreed otherwise in advance.

Please email me at [shirleymoore@deltatherapy.co.uk](mailto:shirleymoore@deltatherapy.co.uk) if you need to contact me between sessions. This is the quickest way to get hold of me. If you would like me to telephone you to rearrange a session, please email me to request this and I will do so as soon as possible. You may also contact me on 07743 768083, either by text or voicemail message, however I check my phone infrequently if I am not expecting a call. I will however check my phone messages if you do not attend for a booked session.

As a professional I will be boundaried in my relationship with clients. If I happen to meet you outside of our sessions, either online or in the “real world”, I will generally not acknowledge you, to avoid awkward questions such as “who was that?” if either of us is with someone else. If you acknowledge me openly, then I will respond in an appropriate, professional manner, however I experience face blindness so may not recognise you outside of our normal meeting place. Please don’t take this personally!

While we may have things in common and in different circumstances might be friendly, our relationship must remain professional and we cannot be friends.

I am unable to accept social media or networking requests from clients.

### **Ending of Counselling**

You are entitled to end our contract at any time. If you decide not to continue, I would be grateful if you could give me 48 hours’ notice prior to any arranged appointment. You have no obligation to explain why you have decided not to continue, but I would appreciate any feedback on my practice.

If we do find ourselves meeting by chance in the future, I will never disclose that we have worked together but of course you are free to do so, should you wish. Because of professional boundaries, any ongoing relationship in this situation would have to be purely professional.

### **My Qualifications and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

My primary therapy qualification is the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) in Person-Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy (with distinction), which I received in March 2020 from the University of the Highlands and Islands. This qualification included the COSCA validated Diploma in Person-Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy. COSCA is the Scottish professional body for counselling and psychotherapy.

I am an accredited member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and abide by their ethical framework and professional standards, which can be found at <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/>. You can check my registration at <https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/registered-membership/>. My registration number is 385357.

I also hold Professional Accredited Membership of the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (membership number NCS22-01800) and also work according to their policies and codes: [ncps.com](http://ncps.com).



I undertake regular CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in line with professional body requirements to keep up to date, expand my knowledge and improve my skills. During the COVID-19 pandemic I undertook CPD in online counselling to support me working in this way. I have also completed additional training in email counselling.

I originally trained as a medical doctor; however, I no longer practise medicine. While you are welcome to discuss any medical problems you may have, and how they affect your life and your wellbeing, I cannot offer advice on medical matters. If you have specific health concerns, or if you tell me something that suggests to me that you would benefit from medical care, I can help you identify an appropriate medical professional with whom you can raise these issues.

I am autistic and have been an active member of the Autistic Community for a number of years. While I do not have the qualifications to carry out formal diagnostic assessments, I have significant knowledge and experience, both personal and professional, in this area.

### **Insurance**

I hold professional indemnity insurance with Balens.

### **Complaints**

I am human and continually learning and I get things wrong. I would like you to feel able to discuss anything about our work together which you have found unhelpful or indeed harmful and I will do whatever I can to address it and learn from it.

You may raise a concern in any session or via email. If you make a formal complaint, it would also be helpful for me to know how you would like me to resolve it and what a good outcome would look like for you. If your complaint is not resolved you have the right to inform my professional body, the BACP <https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/how-to-complain-about-a-bacp-member/> or the NCPS <https://ncps.com/complaints>.

### **Data Protection**

Please see my privacy policy for further details of how I store and process your personal information. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (registration number: ZA889027).

## Security

Please take care to protect your electronic devices against unauthorised viewing by third parties. It is recommended that you use a private device rather than a work one and that you ensure that you have appropriate antivirus software installed.

## Reports

I do not routinely provide a report on the work we have done together. If you require a detailed report, perhaps for benefits or employment purposes or for other healthcare professionals, this is an additional service and there would be a charge of my usual hourly rate. I would be happy to provide a short summary of the dates of sessions attended and your engagement if required. There would be no charge for this.

## Emergency Mental Health Support

I am not available for emergency contact or for those in crisis. If you are in distress and need to contact a mental health professional urgently, please get in touch with your doctor or the emergency services.

Many people experience self-harm or thoughts of suicide. Counselling can be a safe space where you can discuss this with an accepting and non-judgemental therapist. However, if you inform me that you have made imminent plans to end your life then I will be obliged to contact your doctor or the emergency services, however I would not plan to do so without first discussing it with you.

If you require emergency support there are a range of services you can contact:

- Your GP
- NHS 24 111
- Emergency services 999
- Samaritans 116 123 or [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- Breathing Space (Scotland) 0800 83 85 87

If you struggle to use the phone there is an app you can use to contact the 999 service in an emergency. To use the app for the first time, you'll need to set it up and link your 'phone number, so it would be worth doing this before you might need to use it. Details can be found here <https://www.relayuk.bt.com/how-to-use-relay-uk/contact-999-using-relay-uk.html>

## Accepting this Contract

If there is anything in this contract that you do not understand or you wish to discuss, please contact me. The provision of counselling sessions assumes the continued acceptance of the contents of this document.

## **Updates to this contract**

This contract may be updated periodically and without prior notice to you to reflect changes in Delta Therapy's practices or relevant laws. The latest version will be available by emailing [info@deltatherapy.co.uk](mailto:info@deltatherapy.co.uk). I will indicate at the top of the contract when it was last updated. I will inform you of any significant change to my contract that may affect your future sessions with me and give you the opportunity to review whether you wish to continue under the new contract.