

Confidentiality Policy

Orkney Alcohol Counselling & Advisory Service (OACAS) offers confidential help and advice to anybody looking for help with various personal problems. This policy explains what we mean by confidential. It also outlines your rights under the Data Protection Act.

Our Confidentiality Statement

Individuals who come to us for help and advice are often concerned about whether what is discussed will be shared with anyone else such as spouses, parents, friends, doctors, or statutory authorities. The following "Confidentiality Statement" summarises our position:

"OACAS offers confidential help and advice to private individuals. This means that subject to the exceptions outlined below, nothing learned by the Counselling Service from clients seeking advice (including the fact of their visit/call) will be passed to anyone outside the Service without the client's permission."

What Do We Mean by Confidentiality?

An approach for Counselling is to the Service rather than an individual Counsellor. In order to give you the best possible advice a Counsellor may wish to discuss your case with another Counsellor or Practice Supervisor. Discussing cases with other Counsellors does not therefore breach our confidentiality policy.

When Might Confidentiality Be Broken?

This is only likely to happen in very exceptional circumstances. For example; if we believe that serious harm might occur to you or other people. Wherever possible we would try to contact you to discuss things and to make you aware of what is happening before breaking confidentiality.

Referred Clients

For clients who have been referred, for example by a statutory authority or employer, as a condition of an agreement between the client and the referrer different conditions apply. In terms of confidentiality the Client will be informed by OACAS of any information passed onto the referrer. The information passed on will be based on the agreement between the client and the referrer.

Your Right To Privacy

When you approach the Counselling Service details about you and your circumstances will not be discussed in public places where they may be overheard. We appreciate that our reception area is open and if you are concerned about disclosing information in our reception area please ask to speak to someone in private.

Database

Your name, address and telephone number(s) will be entered into our secure database shortly after your initial contact with us. This is for statistical and contact reasons only. This information is NOT shared with any other agency and is removed from our Records as soon as possible after your last contact with us, in term of Data Protection Act 1998.

Do We Keep Case Records?

After you have seen a Counsellor brief notes will be kept about your meeting. The notes are kept for reference purposes only and to ensure that the information you have been given is accurate. If you disclose something to a Counsellor but don't wish this to be recorded you can request that it is not.

Case notes are kept in a safe and secure place, accessible only to authorised staff in the Counselling Service. (Authorised staff includes Counsellors and support staff).

Case notes will be kept for a period of up to six years following the date of the last appointment at the Counselling Service, after which time they are disposed of as confidential waste.

Can I See My Case Notes?

Yes, you have a right to access your case notes.