**CAMBRIDGE ART THERAPY (CAT)**

**Privacy, confidentiality, sharing and protecting information, and consent**

**Personal information**

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR 2018) protect the rights of individuals regarding their personal information. Art Therapists working under the auspices of Cambridge Art Therapy (CAT) are each responsible for storing and protecting data relating to their clients.

We will only collect the personal data we need in order to work effectively with our clients and inform our therapy.

This will include: name, address, telephone number and email address, date of birth, nature of the problem and any current /past treatment. We also ask for a GP/medical contact in case safety issues arise. Where relevant for children we collect school contact details and school-provided referral information.

We gain the information needed from our referral forms, in paper or electronic form. Information (for example our notes about clients’ progress or key issues) is also collected during the course of therapy.

Clients can request access to, or correction or deletion of, their data.

**Data storage**

* We will ensure that all clients’ personal information is kept securely, using password-protected devices for electronic records and information.
* We will keep any paper records and information in a locked cabinet in a secure room, either on our own premises or that of the commissioning organisation.
* We will store all artwork confidentially, either at our own premises in a secure room, or at the setting in which art therapy takes place. After therapy ends clients are able to take their artwork away. We will keep any clients’ artwork not taken by them for two months after therapy ends in order that they can retrieve it by contacting the art therapist if they change their minds. Art works will then be disposed of in a confidential way.
* Beyond situations described below, we will not share your data with any third party.

**Retaining clinical notes after art therapy ends**

* Clinical notes for children and young people will be kept until three years after their eighteenth birthday or five years if that is longer
* We retain clinical notes on adult clients for at least 5 years in case a client has a query or complaint or there is a legal action that would need us to refer to them. We will then dispose of them confidentially.

**Confidentiality and data sharing**

We will only share information about clients

* With a professional supervisor.
* With safeguarding agencies if we are concerned about a client’s safety or the safety of another person. This would normally be discussed with the client first unless it is judged that they or others were at imminent risk.
* Where we practice as part of a clinical or multi-agency team (see below).
* If requested to do so by a court of law.

All clients are entitled to privacy and CAT practitioners will always strive to respect and observe this. Our policy on confidentiality is influenced by the ethical principles which constitute the basis of the British Association of Art Therapists Ethical framework (‘BAAT’).

CAT Art Therapists are accountable both to CAT and any organisation that commissions us. Whilst CAT retains its own authority and standards, we are also obliged to practice within the policy framework of the commissioning setting. It is essential that we work in collaboration with the organisation in relation to client difficulties. With this in mind, it may be necessary, in the interests of the client, for CAT therapists to share information gained in therapy about the client with members of the organisation’s staff.

CAT therapists acknowledge and fulfil the dual requirements to both honour clients’ privacy and also respond to the need for information to sometimes be shared with appropriate agencies/professionals.

In relation to children and young people:

* It is appropriate to keep a child’s parents updated on the progress of art therapy and engagement of their child, and any concerns related to well-being and safety.
* When working within a school, it will be appropriate for the CAT practitioner to share matters relating to the general welfare and progress of the child in school, and other more basic matters relating to the general arrangement of the therapy – such as the goals set for CAT Art Therapy for particular client, the number of sessions planned and attended and the client’s level of engagement with CAT Art Therapist/Practitioner.
* With regard to the content and process of Art Therapy sessions, only major themes and significant changes that emerge in the sessions will be shared – **not** details of the child’s art making/play or verbatim accounts of what they have said. CAT Art Therapists endeavour to make a working contract with the child at the beginning of individual therapy in which they take care to explain what is meant by ’confidentiality’. They will not make a promise of total confidentiality to the child since it is not always possible to keep such a promise. The CAT therapist will make it clear that as far as possible the detail of what the child says or does in the therapy sessions will be respected as private.

Commissioning organisations need to respect the personal nature of what may be shared and ensure information is kept within proper bounds and out of the realm of casual conversations.

**Use of artwork and client information in clinical supervision**

As an HCPC regulated profession it is a requirement that art therapists receive clinical supervision with an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. During supervision the art therapist may share client information and/or artwork in order to help them understand and treat their clients effectively. Supervision is an entirely confidential process and contents of the discussion are not shared.

**Online Art Therapy**

Since March 2020 Cambridge Art Therapy practitioners have been providing art therapy online, through video-calls and phone calls. During these sessions clients’ privacy is protected in the following ways:

* Therapists use headphones in order that conversations cannot be overheard at the therapist end. We recommend clients to do likewise.
* Therapists are situated in a private place where the session cannot be seen by others.
* Our devices are encrypted and are not shared with others, thus protecting access to personal data.
* We do not record therapy sessions and ask that clients also do not record.
* We use updates in IT and virus protection in order to maintain security.
* We agree with clients beforehand what will happen if technology fails and we are cut off mid-session.

**Obtaining consent**

Applying BAAT guidance on GDPR (April 2018) CAT adopts the following practice:

We ask clients or parents of young children to positively opt in to using our service, by giving their written consent to therapy. This may through a consent form or a written contract. Alongside parents and/or the commissioning organisation we will judge whether a young person is competent to give their consent, and whether this is appropriate in each case.

We will separately ask for consent for use of personal information that is not essential to treatment, (such as for publishing an article or giving a talk) and clarify that this consent is not a precondition of a service. We specify why we want the data and what we’re going to do with it. Clients can withdraw this consent without detriment to their treatment.

We keep a record of when and how we received consent.

We review consents on an annual basis to check that the processing and the purposes have not changed. We will refresh consents at two-yearly intervals, including parental consents. In the case of work in schools the refresh will be whenever a new period of therapy with a child begins.

**General complaints** (summary)

If you have a concern or a complaint about our service we want to address it as soon as possible. **Please see our Complaints Policy for full details**. This can be found on [www.cambridgeartttherapy.co.uk](http://www.cambridgeartttherapy.co.uk) under ‘Our Policies’

In the first instance please raise any issue with your art therapist. If you remain concerned please raise it with the commissioning organisation for the service or via [info@cambridgearttherapy.co.uk](mailto:info@cambridgearttherapy.co.uk) if you are a private client.

All CAT therapists are registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC).

If your issue is still unresolved and you have a concern about the conduct of an art therapist you are able to raise a complaint to the Regulatory Body, Health Care Professions Council (HCPC http://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/).

**Complaints about personal data use**

Cambridge Art Therapy practitioners are registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Should a client wish to complain to the ICO they should contact them via <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/> or phone: 0303 123 1113