

# What is Pre-Trial Therapy?

A guide for children and young people



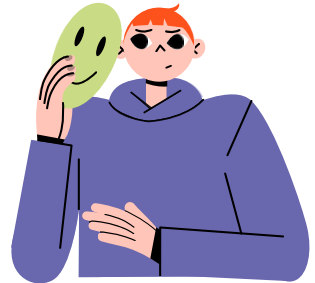
This leaflet is for you. Your therapist will go through it with you at your first appointment. You can keep it and come back to it whenever you need to.

# What is Pre-Trial Therapy?



Pre-trial therapy is any therapy you have after you have reported something to the police, while the investigation is going on, and before the case goes to court.

You can choose to start therapy at any time. That is your decision — no one else's. Your wellbeing is what matters most. Therapy should not be delayed because of what is happening with the police or the courts.



Pre-trial therapy can help you to handle your emotions and feelings while the investigation is happening. It is a space that is for you.

# What happens in Pre-Trial Therapy?

You will have regular sessions with your therapist. They will support you with how you are feeling and what is going on for you. You will be asked to sign a 'client contract' — an agreement that sets out the key things in this leaflet. You sign to say you understand and agree to them.



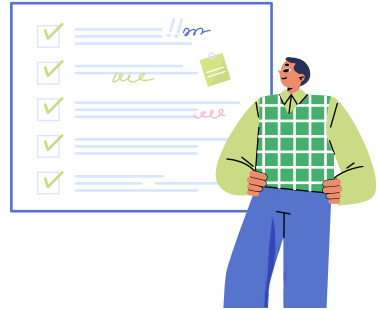
Your therapist will make notes during your sessions. You can read those notes if you want to, to check you are happy with them and that everything is accurate. It's important for you to feel in control of what is written about you.

Sometimes reading the notes can be difficult. Your therapist can help you to do this in a way that feels right for you.



# How is pre-trial therapy different from other therapy?

Once a criminal investigation has started, there are rules that therapy services must follow. These are set out in the law — in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 and the Victim Information Requests Code of Practice 2026. Your therapist follows these.



If your therapist is worried about your safety or someone else's safety, they may need to share that information. This is called safeguarding. They will always try to talk to you about it first.

Your therapist will record what you share with them carefully. This is good practice — it protects you and makes sure the information is accurate. Notes are only shared with the police in very limited circumstances. It does not happen automatically.



# Why would the police want to see my therapy notes?

The police are not allowed to see all your therapy notes. There are strict rules about when they can ask for them.



They can only ask for specific information that they think will help the investigation. For therapy notes, they have to show that the information would be really important to the case — not just that it might be useful. This is called the 'substantial probative value' test. The request also has to be agreed by a senior police officer called a Chief Inspector.

In most cases, your therapy notes will not be requested at all.



# What happens when the police ask for my therapy notes?

If the police do ask to see your records, your therapist will always talk to you first. You do not have to agree — and neither does your therapist. The decision is yours. Your therapist will offer to go through the records with you so you can see what is there and what would be shared.



If you or your therapist decide not to share the notes, the police can apply to a court for a witness summons. This is rare. It is a formal legal order that specifically names your therapist and asks them to produce the relevant part of the notes. If this happens, you and your therapist will be told, and your therapist will have the chance to respond before anything is decided.

If any notes are shared, it is possible that the defense lawyer — the person representing the suspect — might also see them. Your therapist will always try to share as little as possible and will remove anything that is not relevant.



Who can I talk  
to if I have  
questions?





Your therapist will go through this leaflet with you at your first appointment. You can ask questions at any time.



You can also talk to:

- The officer in charge of your investigation (OIC)
- Your Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), if you have one
- Your Victim Support Service



For more information visit [bluestarproject.co.uk](https://bluestarproject.co.uk) or contact us at [info@bluestarproject.co.uk](mailto:info@bluestarproject.co.uk)

