

## ACCORD

Accord N. Ireland Marriage Care Service  
First Floor, 68 Berry Street  
Belfast, BT1 1FJ



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**ACCORD Northern Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service ('ACCORD')** is a voluntary organisation operating in Northern Ireland that aims to promote a deeper understanding of Christian marriage, and to offer individuals and couples a safe, ethical and professional counselling service to support them to address difficulties and challenges in their marriage, relationships and family life.

We work directly with you to offer marriage and relationship counselling services. We respect your privacy and are dedicated to ensuring that the support and services we provide, reflect our commitment to treat all information shared with us with the utmost respect, sensitivity and confidentiality.

### **1. What information does ACCORD collect about me?**

Personal data is any information which identifies you, whether directly, (for example, your name), or indirectly, (for example, a case reference number, address, date of birth). All of the personal data which we collect is obtained from you directly, for example in writing by completing a form, making an enquiry or verbally during a session. There are 3 key stages in the assessment and counselling process that are relevant to the collection of your information:-

- a) First Contact
- b) Assessment Process
- c) Counselling

The personal data which we collect varies as you progress through each stage of the process and may include information which is considered to be 'special category data' such as information on your health, sex life, religious beliefs or political opinions. A general overview of the information which we collect at each stage is set out in the following table for ease of reference.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>First contact</b>      | <p>Information at this stage is limited to data which is necessary to make you an appointment, specifically, your name/s, preferred contact number and possibly, your email address.</p> <p>You may also notify us of about any disability or special requirement you may have in anticipation of your attendance at one of our centres.</p>   |
| <b>Assessment Process</b> | <p>At the Client Needs' Assessment session, you will be asked to sign our Informed consent form to enable us to process your personal data.</p> <p>A Client Index Card is then initiated to record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Case Reference Number</li> <li>➤ Name, address and contact number/s of client/s.</li> <li>➤ Name and contact number for an emergency contact person</li> <li>➤ Contact number for GP</li> <li>➤ Date of Needs Assessment</li> <li>➤ Counsellor's name</li> </ul> <p>Spaces are provided for the following to be added at the end of the counselling work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of joint sessions (if applicable)</li> <li>➤ Number of sessions with male only</li> <li>➤ Number of sessions with female only</li> <li>➤ Date counselling finished</li> </ul> <p>Each client will complete a Client Needs Assessment Questionnaire.</p> <p>We ask you to share with us why you are seeking couples and relationships counselling and why you are seeking it now.</p> <p>Following-the Needs Assessment session, a counsellor must complete and set up a Client File for the case. This file is labelled with the Case Reference Number from the Client Index Card.</p> <p>Further assessment/s may take place, at the discretion of the counsellor, following the Needs Assessment session.</p> |
| <b>Counselling</b>        | <p>Case Notes must be written during each session with the client/s in an official ACCORD Case Notes booklet, (Form 2) which carries the case code and does not contain any identifying information relating to the client/s. Notes are written in sequence with no gaps left between entries. Each session note must be dated and signed in the columns provided.</p> <p>The Case Notes contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ details of the client's problems, dilemmas and issues.</li> <li>➤ factual observations only;</li> <li>➤ details of the progress during the session;</li> <li>➤ details of interventions used by counsellor;</li> <li>➤ details of any goals identified in the session or matters to be subsequently considered;</li> <li>➤ details of the contract with clients and any subsequent amendment.</li> </ul> <p>At regular intervals during the counselling process you will be asked to complete Review Questions to monitor your relationship and service satisfaction.</p>   |

## **2. Why does ACCORD need my information?**

Processing personal data is necessary so that we can provide effective counselling services, tailored to the needs of each individual client. When we process your information, we do so to understand your needs and expectations from counselling, to assist with clinical assessment, and monitor progress as part of a meaningful and holistic service.

We also maintain records to meet safeguarding requirements for children, young people and adults at risk; to supervise and audit our processes; to gather statistical information for research and future service provision; and to implement robust policies and practice within ACCORD. These tasks are necessary so that we can fulfil our wider legal obligations in terms of corporate governance, company and charity law.

Please note that information which has been gathered for statistical purposes is always anonymised.

## **3. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?**

ACCORD relies upon your explicit consent as the legal basis to process your personal data and as a condition of any processing activities associated with special category data. This consent is obtained in writing at the assessment stage before counselling begins.

We also rely upon our legitimate interests as a charitable organisation, compliance with our legal obligations and in extreme scenarios, to safeguard and protect an individual's vital interests.

## **4. Who has access to my records within ACCORD?**

Your data is treated in the strictest confidence. We have stringent protocols in place regarding the handling and storage of client records. All counselling records must be stored in the ACCORD Centre where the case is being handled. Access to client records is controlled and limited to authorised personnel only, (specifically an authorised officer from the Regional Office or the practicing Counsellor responsible for your case). All reasonable security measures are taken to prevent unauthorised access or disclosure including a general prohibition against removing client records and case notes from the centre.

## **5. How long does ACCORD store my information?**

Client Index Cards are retained for 7 years. All case notes are shredded and securely destroyed on expiry of 1 year from the end of your counselling sessions, unless a safeguarding issue has arisen, in which case the notes are sealed and retained indefinitely

marked "Not to be shredded". Case files are stored in date order for efficient and secure disposal.

## **6. Does ACCORD share my information with outside third parties?**

We collaborate with our affiliated companies in the Republic of Ireland, (Accord CLG & Accord Dublin CLG) on issues of service delivery, quality assurance and pastoral care. We do not share your personal data with any third parties unless one of the following conditions apply:

- (i) You have provided your explicit consent; or
- (ii) A disclosure to a third party such as a Court or Tribunal, a government department or agency, the Police/ Gardaí is required in accordance with the law for example: in pursuit of justice in the prosecution of a criminal offence.

In most instances, a request of this nature will not involve direct access to your case file and will instead seek confirmation of your attendance at counselling.

A request made by a third party acting on your behalf, such as your solicitor, must be accompanied by a signed form of consent before any disclosure will be made.

Every request will be considered carefully by ACCORD. The information furnished may be redacted if it would interfere with the rights of another individual including, but not limited to your spouse, child or family member.

## **7. Is my personal data transferred outside of the European Economic Area?**

We operate throughout the island of Ireland but we do not transfer any personal data information outside of the European Economic Area ("EEA"). Anonymised research material may be available to third level institutions outside the EEA including, but not limited to, the USA or Canada.

## **8. What legal rights do I have in relation to the personal data held about me by ACCORD?**

You have the right to view the personal information which we hold about you, including your case notes. You can contact us by telephone, letter or email if you wish to examine what we hold about you. We will require written verification of your request and identity. As explained above, every request will be considered carefully by ACCORD. The information furnished may be redacted if it would interfere with the rights of another individual including, but not limited to your spouse, child or family member. You can also contact us if you believe that any information we have collected is incorrect or incomplete. Steps will be taken to correct any inaccurate information that we hold.

There is no charge to access this information and a response will be provided within one calendar month.

If you have provided us with consent to process your data, you can withdraw that consent at any time. If we are processing your information in accordance with our legitimate interests, you can object to further processing.

## **9. How can I contact ACCORD NI if I have any questions about how it handles my personal data?**

Legal responsibility for all decisions regarding the purpose and means of processing personal data rests with the '**Data Controller**'. ACCORD Northern Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service is the Data Controller.

If you require any further information on this notice or data protection within ACCORD NI please contact:-

Privacy Officer

Accord N. Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service

Regional Office:

First Floor, 68 Berry Street

Belfast, BT1 1FJ

Tel: 028 9023 3002

Email: [privacyofficer@accordni.com](mailto:privacyofficer@accordni.com)

## 10. What can I do if I wish to make a complaint?

We are committed to finding a fair and lawful resolution to any problems or complaints which arise in the course of data processing. Please report any concerns you have to the Privacy Officer within ACCORD NI using the above contact details.

If your complaint cannot be resolved by ACCORD NI or if you feel that it has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Further information can be found online via [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

ACCORD Northern Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service, registered as a company limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland under company number: NI627165. Registered Company Address: First Floor, 68 Berry Street, Belfast, BT1 1FJ . Registered Charity Number: NIC102332.