



Pre-Trial Therapy

Everything you need to know



Bluestar
PROJECT



Harewood
Consultancy



What is pre-trial therapy?

Pre-trial therapy is **any type of therapy** that is accessed when a report has been made to the police, a criminal investigation is underway and before the case has gone to trial.

The choice to enter therapy before, after or during the criminal justice process is yours – this decision should not be made by the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Your wellbeing is the most important factor in choosing when it is the right time to access services and your treatment should not be delayed because of the ongoing criminal justice process.

Accessing therapy pre-trial can be helpful in supporting you emotionally with what has happened, and the impact of the criminal justice process itself.



How is pre-trial therapy different?

When a criminal case is underway, therapy and specialist support services are required to work within CPS Guidelines which you can read [here](#).

As part of the criminal justice process, the police or CPS may seek in very limited situations access to the notes we keep about your sessions.

If you want to talk about the incident under investigation that is okay. It's important for you to know that any new information about that allegation may need to be shared with the police if we receive a notes request or if there is a concern that you or someone else is at risk of harm.



Why would the police want access to my notes?

Therapy notes are sometimes seen as a form of evidence. The police and CPS have a responsibility to look at material that could 'point towards or away from the allegation' that has been made.

There is a possibility that therapy notes, if they include disclosures about the allegation, can form part of the case material that goes to court.



What happens when the police ask for my therapy notes?

The police **will not have access to all your therapy notes**, only very specific pieces of information related to the disclosure or incident under investigation (or what they call "a reasonable line of enquiry").

If the police ask us for access to your notes, we will always ask you first whether you want them to be shared. We will also offer to go through the notes together and share with you a copy of everything that is sent.

You do not have to share your notes if the police ask for them and we as your service are under no legal obligation to do so.

Though this very rarely happens, it is important for you to know, that if we or you refuse to share notes, later in the investigation process the Crown Court can issue a court order to access them.

If this were to happen, the prosecution may need to release some of the information to the defence lawyer – this means that the suspect could have access to some of your notes in these rare cases. For this reason, we keep limited notes about our sessions, as advised by the CPS.



What happens in pre-trial therapy?

Like other therapies, you will meet with your therapist on a regular basis. The therapy will be designed to offer you emotional support with how you are feeling and what is going on for you.

You will be asked to sign a Client Contract which includes in it an agreement and understanding with the key points included in this leaflet.



Who can I talk to about this if I have any questions?

Your therapist will talk with you about this at your first appointment. Other members of the support service may give you information about this if you are in contact with them. The service you are accessing

will be able to talk through any questions you have.

You can also talk to your investigating officer (OIC), Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA Service) or Victim Support Services.

For more info visit www.bluestarproject.co.uk
or contact us on bluestarproject@the-green-house.org.uk