



Counselling, Support and Care for Young People and Families



Security and Confidentiality

Our mission is to:

Improve, preserve and promote good mental health and wellbeing among children, young people and their families.

Registered Charity No 1045429

Online Counselling Security

At TIC+, we take security very seriously and have done everything we can to make sure the conversations you have with our counsellors are as secure as possible.

How secure is the online counselling?

TIC+ online counselling uses the VSEE online platform. VSEE is a super-secure web platform and uses the most advanced encryption technology you can get. In fact, it's NASA's only official chat platform for the astronauts aboard the International Space Station.

The conversations you have with us are scrambled when they're sent across the Internet, so it's very unlikely that your information will fall into the wrong hands. VSEE also uses end-point to end-point technology, which means your information goes directly from you to TIC+ and is never stored anywhere else. This means no-one will be able to see the conversations you have, apart from you and your TIC+ counsellor. Even VSEE don't keep, and can't see, the chat you've had with us.

If you're interested in learning more about VSEE security, you can read their blog here: <https://vsee.com/security>.

How can I make sure my conversations are kept private?

If you're using our online counselling service, you can take the following simple steps to make sure your conversations remain private:

1. Make the call from somewhere safe, where others can't see your screen.
2. Choose a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
3. As soon as you've finished your chat with a counsellor, exit the online waiting room and close down your Internet browser. The chat conversation you've had with the counsellor will then disappear, so no-one else will ever be able to read it.

Someone messaged me and told me they are a TIC+ counsellor.

What should I do?

Our counsellors will never approach you online. When you start your counselling with us, we'll give you a link to the VSEE TIC+ waiting room, so you can access one-to-one online counselling sessions. If you see someone trying to start one-to-one conversations using the TIC+ name anywhere else, you should tell us straight away. Call 01594 546117, text us on 07977 334433 or send an email to admin@ticplus.org.uk.

How can I make sure no-one knows I've been visiting your website?

When you visit websites, your browser remembers lots of information. It can remember which sites you've been to, what you've downloaded, and much more. This is called your Internet history.

You might not want other people to see that you've been looking at the TIC+ website. There are two things you need to do to clear your history:

1. Delete all cookies from the Temporary Internet Files on your computer. A cookie is a piece of information your computer remembers about where you've been online.
2. Delete the websites in your history folder. Don't worry, deleting these isn't difficult.

If you want to go on the Internet without storing any information, you can use private browsing.

Confidentiality

TIC+ is a private and confidential service. This means that whatever you say stays between you and your counsellor.

We would only need to say or do something if:

- You ask us to.
- We believe your life, or someone else's life, is in danger.
- You're being hurt by someone in a position of trust who has access to other children, like a teacher or police officer.
- You tell us that you're seriously harming another person.
- We're worried about the safety of someone who isn't able to speak for themselves, like a very young child, and we need to tell someone to keep that child safe.

What happens if you need to break confidentiality?

Breaking a young person's confidentiality is not something that TIC+ does easily. We will always think about this very carefully.

Breaking confidentiality can be a difficult dilemma for counsellors. There are lots of things they have to think about to work out whether they need to pass your details onto someone else, or not. We'll always try to let you know if we need to break confidentiality. We want to give you the best possible help and support we can.

How do you record information?

When you phone TIC+, chat to us online or meet us face-to-face, we don't keep a word-for-word record of what you say. We just keep a brief written summary of your call, online chat or face-to-face meeting. This means you don't have to go through everything again next time you speak to us. The only time we might need to keep a full record of what you tell us is if we believe you or another person is at serious risk of harm.

Any notes we make are locked away or digitally encrypted to keep them safe.

Why do you need to collect my personal information?

TIC+ is legally bound by the Data Protection Act 1998. This ensures that the information you give us is only used for the purpose for which it was requested, and that your data is held securely.

- TIC+ keeps a record so you don't have to keep going over the same stuff every time you have counselling.
- Records are kept on an electronic database that can only be accessed by TIC+ authorised staff.
- TIC+ keeps your records for 7 years.

We also use the database to collect anonymous statistical information to help us improve our services. This can also involve sharing anonymous information with others in order to promote the TIC+ charity and raise funds for our work with children, young people and families.

Can I have a copy of my TIC+ counselling record?

If you've ever had counselling from TIC+, you can ask for a free copy of any personal information we have about you.

It can take a while for you to receive your personal information, as we always need to make sure that records don't fall into the wrong hands.

It's important to think about whether requesting your records is the right decision for you. Reading over a conversation you've had with a counsellor in the past could be upsetting, and might drag up things you would rather forget. If you decide requesting your records is right for you, please email your request to admin@ticplus.org.uk.

You can also write to us at:

Office 30, Fourth Floor, Building 8,
Vantage Point Business Village
Mitcheldean
Gloucestershire
GL17 0DD

To help us make sure that we're giving the information to the right person, we may need to contact you to confirm your identity.

