



**banish the crows**  
independent  
**counselling psychotherapy**

# **COVID SECURE GUIDELINES**

## **Guidance for Existing and Prospective Clients**

**1 August 2020**

We have now resumed ‘in-person’ (face-to-face) sessions with our clients. We have trialled some adjustments to how we meet and these have been well received by existing returning clients and those who have met with us for the first time since the social lockdown was relaxed.

We are neither expecting nor requiring clients to meet with us in-person and are continuing to offer a variety of ways that we can meet. For some people it might be too soon for them - emotionally or psychologically, and for others there may be very practical reasons why they are unable to meet face-to-face, even if they would prefer to.

Set out below is an update on our therapy space at St. James House in Longton, and a range of safeguards to protect and uphold the health and wellbeing of our clients but also ourselves.

### **What we've been busy doing**

During the lockdown period our studio was fully redecorated, some soft furnishings were removed, and all remaining furnishings have been deep-cleaned. Don’t worry - the room is still comfortable, inviting and familiar but we have used the time to refine and reorganise the contents of the room. It had been a while and three years since the room was last painted.

### **For your safety:**

- During July we introduced a **3-hour interval** between in-person sessions and from 1 August, we returned to the usual **1-hour interval** and more ‘in-person’ sessions being offered to those clients who would prefer it and were safe and well enough to attend in-person.
- Those clients who **prefer** or **need** to continue with **video/phone** sessions **will** be able to do so. Please specify this when booking an appointment with your therapist or when making contact with us via the website enquiry form, or via the BACP\* ‘Find a Therapist’ directory page. Banish the Crows has always offered video/phone sessions as part of our offering and will continue to do so.

**You will never be pressurised by us to attend in-person if you are not comfortable in doing so.**

- Between sessions, soft furnishings will be (lightly) sprayed with antibacterial fabric solution of the required % alcohol level.
- Hard surfaces that clients typically come into contact with such as doors and door handles, tables and the iZettle card reader, for those of you who preferring to pay by card rather than bank transfer, will be damp wiped - again using antibacterial solution of the required % alcohol level.
- Clients will be provided with antibacterial hand solution to clean their hands before they enter and leave the room. St. James House is also committed to providing sanitising stations at both entrances/exits into the building.
- The **distance** between seating in the studio more than meets the social distancing rule set out by the Government and its scientific advisers and physical **contact** between therapist and client can be managed relatively easily when entering and leaving the room.

However, together with the antibacterial hand solution, we **will** provide masks and gloves for those clients who would **prefer** or **need** to use them and we are accepting of using them **if this is your preference**. We will ask clients this each time they attend for an in-person session. Due to the other precautions that we are taking to minimise risk, including the layout of the studio space we will **not** routinely wear masks and gloves.

- We will ventilate the room during and between sessions.
- We will continue to provide bottled water but not hot drinks, until further notice. We are also happy for you to bring along your own hot (and cold) drinks.

### **Our polite request to clients**

- Please continue to pay by **bank transfer** if you are able to. If not, a **card** rather than cash payment would be **preferred**.
- Please observe social distancing when entering, moving through, and leaving St. James House.
- Whilst bathroom facilities are available and open at the Centre and clients are welcomed in using them, to minimise unnecessary risks we

would recommend clients reducing reliance upon them and their use. The bathroom facilities at St. James House are restricted to one person at any one time.

- **Most importantly - if you or anybody else in your household display any of the main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19); if you are made aware that you have been in contact with somebody with coronavirus/symptoms e.g. track-and-trace, OR you have returned from overseas travel to an area that the UK Government requires you to self-isolate upon your return, then the Government and its scientific advisers advise that you MUST stay at home (self-isolate) and get a Covid-19 test at the earliest opportunity.**

**If you need to cancel your session at short-notice, due to coronavirus symptoms we will not charge you.**

If you or anybody else in your household is displaying coronavirus symptoms, meaning that you are unable to attend your session in-person but you want to continue with your session by video or phone, instead then please let your therapist know as soon as you can - we WILL accommodate your request.

The NHS Coronavirus website is the most reliable source of information and guides on what action you should take and when. Click [here](#) to access the NHS website.

### Main symptoms:

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** - this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.

## What to do if you have symptoms

If you have any of the main symptoms of coronavirus:

1. **Stay at home (self-isolate)** - do not leave your home or have visitors. Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also self-isolate.
2. **Get a test** - get a test to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible. Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, should also get a test if they have symptoms.

### Please contact us if:

- You require any further information about the reopening of our studio and the safeguards that we have put in place.
- You want to talk to us about a session that you have already scheduled with us and need to change it or the format OR if you would like to talk about the practicalities of attending an in-person session with your therapist.
- If you have any concerns about anything discussed in this update.

Your health, safety, and wellbeing - whether emotional, psychological or physical is ALWAYS our priority.

\* The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) is the professional association for members of the counselling professions in the UK. Therapists associated with Banish the Crows Independent Counselling Psychotherapy are registered members of the BACP. All BACP members must work in accordance with its professional code: [Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions \(2018\)](#).