



banish the crows
independent
counselling psychotherapy

BEING COVID-SECURE.

**Guidance for Existing and Prospective
Clients.**

14 June 2021

During April 2021 we resumed routine in-person (face-to-face) sessions with clients - where this is the client's preference and they feel able and safe in doing so. Prior to this time we worked in-person 'by exception' with a range of Covid-Secure measures in place in the main building and studio space, and by offering online and teletherapy where attending in-person was not a safe or viable option.

Covid-Secure measures are still applicable and in-place at the time of updating this Guidance. The building and our studio space is fully risk-assessed as required by the Health & Safety Executive and local Government. A copy of the Covid-Secure Risk Assessment and Management Plan is available to those who wish to see it before booking or attending for therapy in-person by clicking [here](#).

We are fully vaccinated against coronavirus (February and May) and continue to test twice weekly using the Lateral Flow Test (LFT) provided free of charge by Government. Click [here](#) to find out more and to order LFT kits. Since starting testing in October 2020 we have continuously reported negative results.

Whilst the vast majority of clients are now meeting in-person we are not insisting that clients meet with us in-person and are continuing to offer a variety of alternatives to meeting in-person. For some people it might be too soon for them - emotionally or psychologically, and for others there may still 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 about our therapy space at St. James House and the range of ongoing safeguards being maintained to uphold and protect the health and wellbeing of our clients but also ourselves.

Covid-Secure Measures

- Those clients who **prefer** or **need** to continue with **online or teletherapy** 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 are (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, are damp wiped - again using antibacterial solution of the required % alcohol level.
- Clients are provided with antibacterial hand solution to clean their hands before they enter and leave the room. St. James House also provides sanitising stations at front and rear entrances/exits.
- 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 for those clients who would **prefer** or **need** to use them and we are accepting of using them ourselves **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.

- The studio space is ventilated during and between sessions.
- We continue to provide bottled water for clients, this without charge. 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 continue to observe social distancing when entering, moving through, and leaving St. James House, and wear a face covering when moving around the building.

- 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 reduce reliance upon them and their use. The bathroom facilities at St. James House continue to be 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. through NHS Track & 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 (online) or phone (teletherapy)**, instead then please let your therapist know as soon as you can - we **WILL** continue to 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.
- 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.



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* 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 \(2018\)](#).