

The Southmead Project

Client Guidance for Face-to-face Counselling – July 2021

The Southmead Project resumed face-to-face counselling sessions in September 2020 in line with Public Health England's (PHE) advice on working in a Covid-secure way and put measures in place to ensure that our workplace remained as safe as possible.

We are now in a position to use all of our building and counselling rooms since the requirement to stay socially distanced has been removed. However, we are still mindful of creating as safe a space as possible for you and our team, and so we are asking for your help in taking the steps below.

Entering the Building

When you arrive at the Southmead Project, please could you:

- Arrive as close to your session time as possible and please be aware that our waiting area is small.
- If your session takes place in the large room on the ground floor, your counsellor will discuss whether you want to come straight in at your session time or wait upstairs.
- Please come in the front door and press the buzzer. There will be hand sanitiser downstairs so please use this on entering to the building.
- Your counsellor will try to welcome you at the top of the stairs and where possible we will limit which team members greet you so that it limits the amount of people that you are in contact with.
- There will be masks, hand sanitiser and disposable gloves available in the waiting area and in your counselling room if you would like to use them (which are a matter of choice and not compulsory).
- Please feel free to sit in the waiting area, which can hold a maximum of two people, or alternatively one person can sit outside in the garden area.
- We unfortunately will not be able to offer hot drinks for the time being as there is still a high risk of transmitting the virus this way, but we can provide you with disposable cups of water instead.
- We will ensure that the Southmead Project building is kept as clean as possible and your counsellor will spray counselling chairs before and after they are used, and will wipe-down hard surfaces, handrails, door handles, light switches and the front door buzzer.
- If you use the bathroom, please wipe down surfaces that you touch and use hand gel afterwards.

Please be aware that whilst we have taken every precaution to ensure your safety while attending face-to-face counselling, the risk of contracting Covid still exists (which includes the risks around travelling to and from the Southmead Project). We are also unable to stay two metres apart in some of our counselling rooms.

If you or anyone you live with develops Covid-19 symptoms, or if you have been in contact with anyone who has symptoms or is self-isolating, then please inform us straightaway and stay at home. An online

or phone counselling session can be arranged instead if this is appropriate for you. Please note that you will not lose a counselling session if a cancellation is as a direct result of Covid.

If your counsellor contracts Covid, they have a duty to pass on your name and contact details (email, text or phone) to the NHS as part of the 'test and trace' procedure. Confidentiality in this case will be broken in the public interest and for reasons of public health. Your counsellor will not pass on information around why you have been in contact with them or that you are a client of the Southmead Project.

We will not be asking you to complete a lateral flow test before you attend a counselling session and we will not be asking our counsellors to complete one. However, if you would feel more comfortable to take a lateral flow test, please find more information on how you can order free tests here:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Please feel free to speak to your counsellor or our Head of Counselling, Helen Biggs, if you would like to discuss any of this further. The Southmead Project office phone number is 0117 9506022 and Helen can be contacted on: helen.biggs@southmeadproject.com.