



**Katie McGill Counselling & Psychotherapy
Covid-19 Policy**

Face-to-face therapy sessions

By choosing to attend face-to-face therapy sessions, you are accepting the risk of exposure to Covid-19 (or other public health risks). This risk may increase if you travel by public transport. If you decide at any time that you would feel safer continuing online or returning to online therapy sessions, I will honour that decision as long as it is practical and clinically appropriate.

The main symptoms of Covid-19 are a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. The new Omicron variant may present as cold-like symptoms. If you have any of these symptoms, get a free test to check if you have Covid-19 and stay at home until you get your result. Please notify me of your circumstances as soon as possible so we can arrange an online appointment or reschedule. Similarly, I will notify you if I feel unwell or have been exposed to Covid-19.

Please do not attend a face-to-face appointment if you are displaying any Covid-19 symptoms or if you think you have been exposed to other people who have tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 7 days.

I hope that the following information reassures you that every step has been taken to ensure your safety. If you have any questions or concerns in relation to this document, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: contact@katiemcgillcounselling.com.

For more information on Covid-19 in England, visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Changes made to the office

I have introduced new measures to protect the safety of my clients, the wider public and myself.

- A limited number of people access the therapy office each day. I am the only person who uses the therapy office on the days that clients attend. I generally see no more than 4 clients a day.
- Office seating in the therapy office has been arranged for appropriate physical distancing (2 metres apart).
- Alcohol-based hand sanitiser is available for clients to use.
- Appointments are scheduled at specific intervals to ensure effective cleaning of the therapy office between clients.
- I am happy for you and I to wear a face covering, if this would make you more comfortable. A disposable mask can be provided for the session.
- To reduce physical contact, please do not pay with cash where possible. Contactless online payment is preferred.
- Tissues will be provided. A pedal rubbish bin can be easily accessed and will be emptied between each client.
- Hard surfaces that you are likely to touch will be cleaned before each appointment. The soft furnishings will be spray disinfected before each appointment.
- The office will be well ventilated between each client. At your request, the office door can be kept open during our session for additional ventilation. Please be aware that this may reduce the confidentiality of our session.

- To minimise physical contact, I can no longer offer refreshments. Please feel free to bring your own water in a bottle or tea/coffee in a flask with a lid.
- To avoid additional physical contact, the side gate entrance will be left open for you to attend your appointment. Please do not arrive early for your appointment, as the gate will be closed.
- Please note there is no access to toilet facilities, except in an emergency.

Our joint responsibility to minimise exposure to Covid-19

- We will only proceed with a face-to-face session if we are both symptom-free. If you attend an appointment and I believe that you have symptoms or learn that you may have been exposed to Covid-19, I will ask you to leave the office immediately. We can follow up with an online therapy session, where appropriate.
- Please wait in your car or outside until our appointment time. The gate will be open for you to enter. If the gate is shut, please wait for me to open it.
- I will wash my hands between clients. Please wash your hands before attending your appointment and use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser on arrival and departure.
- We will maintain a safe distance of 2 metres and will have no physical contact (e.g. no shaking hands).
- We will try not to touch our face or eyes with our hands. If we do, we will use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser provided.
- Any tissues will be deposited in the rubbish bin provided.
- Please bring minimal personal items to the appointment.
- We will follow up-to-date government guidelines between appointments, to minimise our exposure to Covid-19.
- If you or a resident in your home tests positive for Covid-19, or you are aware that you have been exposed to other people who may have had Covid-19 in the last 7 days, please notify me and do not attend a face-to-face appointment. Similarly, I will notify you if I feel unwell or have been exposed to Covid-19.

Please note that these precautions are subject to change if additional local, or government guidelines are published. We will talk about any necessary changes and come to an agreement that works for both of us. If there is a resurgence of Covid-19 cases or if other health concerns arise, I may require that we meet online to protect our safety. If you have concerns about meeting online, we will discuss this and find a solution that works for both of us.

Your confidentiality in the case of infection or exposure to Covid-19

Public interest is the general welfare and rights of the public that must be recognised, protected and advanced. Disclosures in the public interest, based on the common law, are made where this is essential to prevent a serious and imminent threat to public health, national security, the life of the individual or a third party, or to prevent or detect serious crime. In regards to Covid-19, confidentiality may be broken for reasons of public interest in the area of public health.

If you test positive for Covid-19 and have attended a face-to-face appointment, or if I believe you have been exposed to Covid-19 at my office, I will be required to notify the NHS Test and Trace service. If it is necessary to report this, I will provide the minimum information necessary and will not go into any details about the reason for your visit or our therapeutic work. The NHS Test and Trace Privacy notice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-privacy-information/test-and-trace-overarching-privacy-notice>