

## **Covid-19 update to Clinic opening procedures 30 October 2020**

### **Introduction**

**This policy and guidance have been updated in line with the changes to the local lockdowns and tier system in place from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November.**

Life In Action centre for counselling and psychotherapy reopened on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 , however in order to maintain a safe working environment the government social distancing and health and safety practises must be observed and implemented by all Staff, Counsellors and therapists. We have always managed to keep our service going using protective measures as well as our on-line services supporting those in need.

### **Returning to Work Requirements**

- 1- Members, clients, and visitors must not enter the Centre if they have any flu like symptoms eg. cough or sneezing that are in addition to any normal symptoms that they have on a regular basis or have anyone in their household with these symptoms. This is in line with the government guidelines.
- 2- All clients are legally required to wear a face mask while in the session unless an exemption is applicable such as, 'to wear a face covering will cause them severe distress', or the counsellor agrees otherwise but this would then be at their own risk. As such all counsellors, students on placement and therapists are responsible for managing the risk with each individual client regarding keeping the client and themselves safe while in the therapy room. Other factors to take into consideration are the working environment, the health issues of the client and counsellor and of the people in each of their households. An informed choice can then be made together that establishes what procedures need to be put in place to keep both parties safe. Eg. The client/counsellor to wear/not wear a face mask during the sessions taking into account government guideline exemptions and the needs of both parties. The agreed procedures should be noted in the client's case notes and implemented at every session.
- 3- Members who are deemed to be on the high-risk list and have been self-isolating for 3 months must contact the office before coming into the Centre to resume practise.
- 4- Upon entering the Centre, Members should wash their hands thoroughly and invite their clients to use the hand gels at the main door and in the therapy rooms. This should be for a period of 20 seconds and there are now additional sanitising stations at both doors to the building and main office
- 5- In-between sessions Members should wash their hands or use the hand gels and sanitise the therapy room door handles and furniture arms using detox wipes.
- 6- All Members and clients must whenever possible, observe the social distancing rule and maintain a 2- metre distance between themselves and other people. This also applies when using the stairs and kitchen areas and waiting areas.
- 7- We will be advising clients that face coverings are to be worn in the sessions and on entering the building. This is to protect us all in line with our Risk Assessment.
- 8- Members must ask clients to arrive on time so that they can go straight to the therapy room and should therefore advise their clients in advance which room they will be using and its
- 9- location in the building before the session. Alternatively, if this is not possible for some reason



- 10- then Members must meet their client in the foyer and escort them to the therapy room or wait at the top of the stairs.
- 11- Clients who are accompanied by a visitor should whenever possibly ask them not to wait on the premises and to only return at the end of the client's appointment time.
- 12- All crockery and cutlery must be washed thoroughly, left to drain, and put away once dry.
- 13- Members must ensure they vacate the therapy rooms on time, which is 5 minutes before the booked end time, seeing their client out of the building.
- 14- Members must remember to respect social distancing, at all times, and therefore not remain in the foyer or social spaces within the building for any longer than is absolutely necessary.
- 15- If either yourself or a member of your family have had to self-isolate or have suffered from symptoms since your last session you must notify the office before attending your session. Failure to do so may result in being asked to vacate the therapy centre. Your session may be cancelled.
- 16- In line with the recent government changes to towns and cities going in to local lockdown and the introduction of the tier system, should your home address be in an areas in the highest tier (currently tier 3) you will be asked to remain at home and will be offered your session online using Zoom. Your therapist will contact you regarding this, but you have a responsibility to notify the clinic if this is the case. We will not be able to see clients face to face while in the highest tier.

NB. When the office reopens during the allocated times Members, visitors and clients will not be able to enter due to social distancing measures. However, Members can contact the office by email, telephone. This is inline with our new key procedure and move of office location.