

Covid-19 Notice for Centre Users as from 21st July 2020

At The Albany Centre, we are closely monitoring the situation with Coronavirus and these Guidelines are in line with Government guidance. These guidelines are subject to change and will be continually reviewed and updated as the situation evolves.

The Albany Centre has identified and reviewed the potential risks and hazards that may contribute towards the spread of infection. Therefore, we have compiled a set of guidelines and updates to help reduce these risks by minimising close physical contact and by maintaining an appropriate distance. Whilst we are aware that we can never eliminate the risk, we can take all the necessary steps to guard against any potential cross infection.

Whatever your profession, please ensure that you check with advice from your professional body on a regular basis as guidance is updated. If you are a counsellor, you may find it useful to follow this link to BACP's current guidance: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/coronavirus/faqs-about-coronavirus/>.

You may wish to consider issuing your clients with a disclaimer. It is also recommended that you check with your own insurance before commencing face-to-face work at The Albany Centre.

Disclaimer

You must assess your own personal risk and comfort when deciding to attend face to face sessions, and that of your client(s). The Albany Centre is taking every possible precaution to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 contamination or infection, the risk cannot be eliminated. Therefore, The Albany Centre cannot be held responsible or liable should you contract COVID-19 whilst attending in-person sessions.

Albany Centre changes to minimize the risks of COVID transmission

Some clients will find the idea of missing their sessions more upsetting than the risk of the Coronavirus. Where possible we need to limit any disruption to our clients' therapy process.

As an alternative to face to face sessions within the rooms, we can now offer a quiet working space in all rooms if there are limited working facilities at home due to space and noise. There is an excellent WiFi connection in the building, and in both

Room 4 and Room 5 devices can be directly connected to LAN lines to boost connectivity.

1. The outside intercom is still in use; you may wish to use this with our cleaning provisions (sanitizer in the entrance hall, wipes in the building) or ask your client to phone you – please see below.
2. Cleaning of communal areas (e.g. toilets, stairs, corridors) is occurring on a regular basis, please see below.
3. New air purifiers have been installed in each room to ensure that the shared indoor space is kept sanitised to prevent cross contamination. These are adjustable from silent to a low humming sound, so will provide minimal background noise to your sessions. Instructions are provided in the desk drawer of each room.
4. Windows that are not facing the side street, and within the toilets, will be kept open.
5. Tea and coffee making facilities have been removed and the water coolers are not currently available to use as we are taking all the necessary steps in fighting cross infection. (This has also included removal of the chiller cabinets). Please bring in your own drink if required and ensure any used drinking items are thrown in our large main bins or taken away with you.
6. Masks may be worn in communal areas by Centre users, practitioners and clients alike. You may also wish to bring in your own disposable gloves. Within the consulting rooms you and your clients can reach your own agreement around wearing masks, the air purifiers are provided to assist with this choice.
7. The cushions in all rooms have currently been removed to prevent cross infection. This will be continually reviewed as the 'R' rate is monitored as per the government guidelines.
8. Toilets within The Albany Centre will be in use and are carefully managed and cleaned to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
9. All staff and users of the Centre, and their clients, should take their temperature before coming to the Albany Centre; do not come in if you have a temperature of 37.8C or higher. We ask that you ask your clients to do the same, thank you.

Steps taken by The Albany Centre to reduce cross infection

1. Signs will be placed around the building to increase awareness of the need to increase hand washing frequency and to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
2. We ask that high levels of hygiene will be adhered to by Centre users with regular and thorough hand washing throughout the day, including in between every appointment.
3. Appointments between different users/therapists must be booked at least 15 minutes apart to allow time between sessions to vacate the room and to allow airborne droplets to fall.
4. Hand sanitiser is available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and suitable hand washing facilities including running water and liquid soap.
5. Paper towels are provided in the toilets, alongside antibacterial gel in dispensers conveniently located in the waiting area, and consulting rooms.
6. Staff will ensure frequent rubbish collection. Rubbish for collection by the Maltings will be stored just inside the street door.
7. Apologies, we have removed the business card holders for obvious reasons. (See risk assessment). Each practitioner hiring rooms may pin one card to the noticeboard in the communal area on the first floor. If you are a regular Centre user, please consider advertising on our website.
8. The Albany Centre has made the decision that the two toilets will still be in use. These will be monitored and cleaned regularly by staff; we also ask that you follow hand washing and hand sanitizing procedures and wipe door handles and flush levers.

Steps that we ask Centre users to take

1. Please arrange for your clients to arrive at The Albany Centre *at the exact start time of their session* to avoid people waiting in the building in our small communal areas.
2. You may wish to use the intercom system on the first floor to let your client in to the building – please then wipe down the intercom afterwards with the antibacterial wipes provided on the windowsill nearby. Sanitiser is also available on the windowsill. Alternatively, you may choose to ask your clients to call you on your mobile phone before entering the building *at the time of their appointment*, rather than pressing the intercom to announce their arrival.
3. Please use the air purifiers, this includes switching them on prior to your session and letting them run for a few minutes after your session; follow the instructions provided in the drawers and remember to turn off as you leave.
4. Between each client, please wipe your door handle (both sides of the door), desk and door sign with the antibacterial cleaner/wipes provided. Please also wipe down the chairs and any other contact points in the room. You may wish to have longer gaps between clients than the required 15 minutes to allow adequate time for this and The Albany Centre recommends this.
5. Before the sessions begin, open the door to the counselling room and please ask your client to proceed directly into your counselling room ahead of you.
6. It is recommended that you sit in the chair furthest from the door, so that your client is not required to walk too close to you when going to sit down. Please sit in the same chair if you have more than one session in a row.
7. Please do not make direct physical contact with clients, such as handshakes or hugs.
8. Please use the hand gel sanitiser dispensers provided and advise your clients to use these both before and after the session. Please wash your hands regularly and in between clients.
9. In the first floor corridor and on landings and stairs, please move quickly along or allow people to pass. Do not gather in the corridor or communal area (previously the 'refreshment area').

10. Within the counselling rooms, we have arranged the furniture to allow for a 1 metre space between therapists and clients. Therefore, we ask that you do not move the furniture.
11. The Albany Centre remains staffed on an ad hoc basis; we therefore ask all practitioners to use the small room bins only for tissues. All cups or food packaging brought into the Centre must be disposed of in the large bins, divided into recycling and general waste.
12. Each room is provided with tissues, wipes, sanitizer, room spray and instructions for the air purifier. Please do not leave your belongings in the rooms or attempt to store them in the drawers. Please remove a number of tissues for each client prior to a session and ensure used tissues are placed in the small room bin.
13. You may wish to consider requesting BACS payments from your clients to avoid cash/cheques changing hands. Where possible, please complete all paperwork electronically to avoid the risk of cross-contamination.
14. At the end of each session, ask your client to use sanitizer, and open the door for them as they leave the room.
15. Please wash your hands between client sessions for 20 seconds using soap and water and use sanitizer frequently.
16. Please make your clients aware of the guidelines we ask you to follow, and direct them to our website for this document, our staff policy and our risk assessment.
17. **If you discover that you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus, or has had symptoms of coronavirus:**
 - a. Please alert the Centre directors on thealbanycentre@hotmail.com
 - b. Please do not come to The Albany Centre even if you are symptom-free
 - c. Please follow the Government guidelines for contact tracing and self-isolation
 - d. Reschedule client sessions for when you are no longer at risk of developing or carrying coronavirus.

18. If you have symptoms of coronavirus or a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus:

- a. Please alert the Centre directors on the albanycentre@hotmail.com
- b. Please follow the Government guidelines for testing, contact tracing and self-isolation
- c. You may need to amend your client counselling agreements/contracts to reflect the fact that you may need to share their details with the contact tracers.
- d. Please do not come to The Albany Centre and reschedule sessions for when you are feeling better and have completed the 14-day isolation period
- e. Please advise your clients to do the same if they have symptoms of or are diagnosed with coronavirus

19. If any therapist develops symptoms of coronavirus or has a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus:

- a. The room they have been working in will be closed and should not be used under any circumstances until it has undergone a thorough clean.
- b. The therapists who also used the same room will be notified that they are unable to use the room, and where possible will be allocated an alternative room temporarily. If this is not possible, their clients should be offered online/telephone sessions where appropriate, until their usual room is cleared for use again.

Mosaic Therapists – see separate policy

Course participants – see separate policy