

COVID-19 Protocol



At Magic Words Therapy we take our staff and client's health, safety and wellbeing seriously. We continue to provide a high quality service via our online therapy platform for most clients, alongside some face to face sessions resuming for those clients considered to be unsuitable for online therapy, that understand the risks involved and where the benefit of face to face contact outweighs the risk of COVID-19 transmission. We are taking a number of measures to ensure clients and staff are kept safe.

The document below sets out our 'COVID-19 protocol' that staff must adhere to at all times during face to face sessions.

Personal health

- Staff and clients must inform their manager/therapist IMMEDIATELY if THEY or ANY MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD suffers from, or begins to suffer from the following symptoms:
 - **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)
 - **fever or loss of smell or taste** (also called anosmia)

Staff and clients should follow the government advice (link below):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876719/Coronavirus_what_to_do_if_you_or_someone_you_share_home_with_signs_coronavirus_20200328.pdf

If staff are self-isolating but feeling well, or if staff are self-isolating because of a family member and they are well in themselves, they should continue to work but

using the online therapy platform and/or Microsoft365 to deliver therapy/complete their work.

- Speech and language therapists are considered key workers. If staff are worried that they or a member of their household has symptoms, we can request a COVID-19 test. Staff should inform their manager if they need one so that they can complete the application on your behalf.
- Staff should ensure that they have downloaded the government COVID Test and Trace app and are following the advice from any notifications provided, alerting your manager if you are asked to self-isolate.
- Staff are very strongly encouraged to ensure that they are on the register with their GP to receive a vaccination in Phase 1 of the vaccination rollout. This is out of a duty of care not only to clients, but also to colleagues that staff work with as well as protection for individual staff having had the vaccine. This is not mandatory but any staff member not wishing to have the vaccination for any reason should discuss this confidentially with their manager.
- Staff should undertake a lateral flow test either at home, or at their school setting twice per week. Once on a Sunday evening and once on a Wednesday evening. Any positive results should be reported to Eleanor Harris immediately.

Working from home

- Staff must continue to work from home at all possible times when not seeing clients face to face. This is to minimise their time at the office and the chance to catch/spread the virus. Staff may come into the office WHEN NECESSARY to print documents off and collect resources. Staff who find working from home difficult for their mental health may choose to come into the office to do their online therapy, however they should avoid working in the same room as another person wherever possible and observe all hygiene and social distancing measures.
- Staff should minimise printing and laminating as much as possible. We must make a concerted effort to provide resources electronically, and to use resources electronically as much as possible e.g. Powerpoint on therapist's laptop for face to face sessions. Printing will be monitored as we want to reduce our printing for both environmental and infection control reasons.

Client interactions

- Where at all possible, client interactions should remain online rather than face to face. For clinic clients Lindsay-Ann Oxford (Service Coordinator) and all therapists

should use the 'Decision Making Flowchart' document in order to determine whether face to face sessions are appropriate for a client.

- For the foreseeable future we will ONLY be offering face to face appointments in clinic or schools to avoid moving across multiple sites within a day. Home visits may be permitted on a case by case basis, with a thorough risk assessment completed with a manager.
- Therapists should send all clinic clients the 'face to face checklist' prior to the face to face session and review the results before the session in order to complete a client risk assessment FOR EVERY CLIENT in order to determine what level of PPE is required (see client risk assessment document). The risk assessment should be attached to the client's WriteUpp file and the result along with required PPE level recorded in their notes.
- In schools, you should make yourself aware of the school's Infection Prevention and Control policy and follow that policy closely. A risk assessment should be completed by the therapist for high risk clients where an aerosol generating procedure, intimate care or where there is an expectation of coming into contact with bodily fluid, which should inform which level of PPE is required.
- Therapists should immediately check before clients enter the clinic building that their client is well and not showing any symptoms.
- Therapists should ask clients to use the alcohol gel provided to sanitise their hands immediately as they enter the building using the alcohol gel station provided at the entrance.
- Therapists should open the front door and all internal doors for the clients, propping them open temporarily while the clients pass through allowing the clients to proceed first and following at a 2 meter distance. Therapists should immediately wipe down the door bell as soon as clients have entered using the disinfectant or bleach wipes.
- At schools, before collecting the child, the therapist should check with the teacher/TA that the child is well and has no symptoms. IF A CHILD HAS ANY COVID SYMPTOMS the therapist must cancel/postpone the session until the child is well.
- At schools, where the weather allows, and after obtaining permission from the SENCo, consider holding your sessions outside wherever possible.
- At school before working with the child the therapist should ask the child/client to wash their hands at the nearest sink (for school children this will be the sink in their classroom).
- When collecting the child DO NOT HOLD THE CHILD'S HAND UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO KEEP THEM SAFE.
- Staff should avoid touching their face at all times.

- At school and at clinic, as far as possible, staff should observe the 2 meter distancing policy when walking to the session. In the session, staff should think carefully about the layout of the tables, trying to carry out sessions where the client/child is at the far end of the table and the staff member is at the other end at 90 degrees (try to avoid facing across the table) wherever possible maintaining at least 2 metre distance. Always sit side by side in preference to face to face. You should ensure that any window are open to allow good ventilation.
- In clinic, therapists should rotate the clinic room that they see clients in to avoid a client coming in to the same room as a client just seen.
- Therapists should book higher risk clients (those that cannot observe 2 metre social distancing) in towards the end of the day rather than at the beginning wherever possible.
- For group sessions, the therapist should ensure that there is at least 2 metres between children sitting on seats/on the floor. If this is not possible due to space then the group cannot run with such large numbers.
- Where staff have to break the the 2 metre distance and/or face to face rule e.g. to undertake an oral motor assessment or to manipulate resources in front of the child, they should ensure that they are wearing the minimum PPE of a single use apron, gloves and a face covering/surgical mask/clear face covering, a face shield is optional in addition but preferable.
- When completing an oro-motor assessment, therapists should not touch the child's face or mouth, but ask them to follow your instructions instead. Where you cannot keep a 2 metre distance, PPE should be worn as above.
- Therapists should wipe their devices (i.e. iPads) and face shield with an alcohol or bleach wipe AFTER EVERY SESSION and ensure both the therapist and the child/client washes their hands after the session. If the therapist does not have any wipes available DO NOT USE THE DEVICE FOR ASSESSMENT OR THERAPY WITH THE CHILD/CLIENT.
- Therapists should use a social story and/or visuals to explain to clients the need for social distancing and the reason you are wearing a face shield.
- Therapists should only use toys and games that can be wiped down and thoroughly cleaned after each session. Therapists should not use soft fluffy cuddly toys unless they will be putting them in the washing machine on a 60 degree wash after each session (best avoided wherever possible).
- Staff should ensure that they do not wear the same work clothes twice and that they wash their clothes on at least 60°C, separately from other household clothes, or if not possible due to the type of fabric they should use disinfecting solution to soak their clothes. If you are seeing a client that cannot maintain the 2 metre distance, or

where you are performing an Aerosol Generating Procedure (including a dysphagia assessment) you should bring a change of clothes to work and a plastic bag so that you can change out of your work clothes at work before leaving the building to go home. You should wash your hands immediately after placing the dirty clothes in the plastic bag.

- Staff who are older, male, or in the black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) group may wish to consider wearing the minimum level of PPE at all times during any face to face sessions as research has shown a higher chance of severe illness for these groups of people.

Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP)

- The only AGP that Magic Words Therapy will allow is dysphagia assessment, and only for clients that are NOT a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Any therapist required to undertake a dysphagia assessment should ensure that they have the correct PPE (single use or reusable face fit tested FFP3 or FFP2 face mask/face shield/long sleeved single use gown/single use gloves) before undertaking the assessment and that they have requested a fitting from a 'competent fitter' from Lindsay-Ann Oxford (we will buy in a fitting from a qualified person). This is to ensure the brand of face mask you are using is the correctly fitted one. You will need to allow enough time before the appointment to get the equipment and fitting completed.
- You should ensure that the assessment takes place away from other clients, preferably in a separate AGP room/area, and that the area is well ventilated.
- Reuseable equipment used should be washed with soap and water and then disinfected with a chlorine-based product such as Milton prior to leaving the setting.

Office hygiene

- The office should be well ventilated and windows and doors open as much as possible (with the exception of the front door).
- Staff should not shake hands or kiss to greet colleagues or clients.
- Whenever you leave your desk or room at the office, staff should wipe down the screen, keyboard, table and telephone with an alcohol or bleach wipe. Also wipe the door handles as you leave and deposit the used wipe in the bin placed by the external door.

- Desks will be placed so that there is a 2m distance between desks. Staff should not work with less than 2m distance. Staff should use the therapy, training and meeting rooms (at the Newport Pagnell office) to work in instead where they are unable to work from home.
- When using the tea/coffee making facilities, staff should ensure that they wipe down any handles e.g. drawer/kettles handles once they have used them.
- Staff should wipe down the photocopier screen and buttons with a disinfectant or bleach wipe after every use.
- Staff should wipe pens at the reception desk with a disinfectant or bleach wipe after every use by themselves or a client when signing into the building.

Training

- All training for the foreseeable future will take place online to avoid large numbers of people in a small space. Therapists should offer school staff 'live' or 'recorded' training sessions while we are unable to offer face-to-face training.

Last updated 15th March 2021 by Eleanor Harris