

Belfast Community Acupuncture - Welcome and information for new clients

A warm welcome to Belfast Community Acupuncture! We are a local, privately run acupuncture clinic emphasizing professional, ethical and affordable treatments for pain, stress and chronic illness. We are the only NI clinic registered with the Association of Community and Multibed Acupuncture Clinics (ACMAC). During Covid-19 our new safety procedures mean that we are not able to offer our traditional high volume, low cost clinic but will operate a 1-2-1 clinic instead. Fees are detailed below.

Should you contact your GP? Qualified medical advice should always be sought if you have symptoms which cause you concern. **There is no substitute for proper medical tests** to rule out a potentially serious condition.

What can you expect from acupuncture? For your first treatment you will discuss your health concerns in detail. During Covid-19 our guidelines encourage us to work 'virtually' where possible, so we may contact you by phone/email where possible to help minimize close contact. The aim of acupuncture is to achieve mild to moderate relief of symptoms following the first treatment improving over a few weeks of treatment, depending upon how long you've had those symptoms. Sometimes a response takes a few weeks but if no response is achieved by four weeks we would question the value of continuing. We will also discuss a Chinese Medicine perspective, or current western clinical research according to our individual training. Recovering from ill health is a challenging journey with ups and downs, and while some people respond very quickly it is normal to experience flare-ups along the way whether you are using acupuncture or any other modality. Acupuncture can

help you become more resilient against these flare-ups. With chronic health problems, realistic goals are important so your treatments should be an open dialogue with your practitioner, 'mutually tuning' your goals within the scope and limitations of acupuncture therapy. Your priorities will naturally change so please keep this conversation going!

What to do before and after your treatment

You should eat something light before your appointment but not arrive full. It can be helpful to inform us of anything you feel we should know (medications, allergies, infections, clotting disorders, pacemaker, history of seizures or fainting). There is no reason not to resume normal activities after acupuncture, but we recommend avoiding any activity that might exacerbate your condition. Please ask if in doubt.

FEES: Note, multibed clinics are currently closed due to Covid-19

1-2-1 appointments are available as follows (a refundable £15 deposit secures a slot):

- All first appointments (1hr) £35
- Acupuncture (1hr appointment) £35
- Cupping (30 minute appointment) £20 (follow-up appointments only)
- Auricular (ear) acupuncture (30 minutes) £20 (follow-up appointments only)

CANCELLATION POLICY - To sustain the lowest fees possible, a STRICT CANCELLATION FEE of **£15** applies to cancellations of **< 24 hrs**

(The only exception is if you have symptoms of Covid-19 e.g. new cough, fever/temperature, loss of taste or smell), in which case NO cancellation fee will apply). A deposit of £15 is requested to confirm a booking, fully refundable if the appointment is cancelled BEFORE 24

hours e.g. if you cancel a 2pm appointment at 2.30pm the day before your appointment, **the £15 deposit is retained under the cancellation policy.**

What Are The Risks/Side Effects? Mary and Emma are fully trained and professionally registered practitioners. In properly trained hands, acupuncture is a safe therapy with minimal side effects. In a survey of 9408 patients in the U.K., 10.7% of respondents reported adverse events, which most commonly included post-treatment tiredness/exhaustion, headaches, temporary needling pain or bruising (Macpherson et al., 2004)¹. Cupping can cause temporary discolouration under the skin, which can last a couple of days. It is possible for symptoms to *temporarily* worsen after treatment but it can be a good sign that you are responding to treatment and should progress to a more desirable outcome within a few days. No treatment (acupuncture or cupping) should be painful or alarming (everyone is different so please tell us!). However acupuncture should stimulate a tolerable sensation called “*deqi*” where the local area might for example feel heavy, or achy. Particularly tense, tender spots (*ashi points, or trigger points*) may produce a strong *deqi* also called a ‘twitch response’. This is considered part of the treatment, and is nothing to worry about. ‘Dose’ (number of needles, intensity of *deqi* sensations, adding electro-stimulation) will be adjusted during your treatment or during subsequent visits to ensure it is comfortable, or to improve response, or to avoid a reoccurrence of any previous aggravation. It is therefore essential that you tell us how you feel during and after treatment so that we can tailor the treatment to suit you as an individual person.

¹ [1] Macpherson, H., Scullion, A., Thomas, K. J., & Walters, S. (2004). Patient reports of adverse events associated with acupuncture treatment: a prospective national survey. *Quality & Safety in Health Care*, 13(5), 349–355. <https://doi.org/10.1136/qhc.13.5.349>

Additional Information for Attending Belfast Community Acupuncture During Covid-19 (for all clients)

We are now operating under a 'new normal' with special guidelines and procedures. There are some changes to previous routines that we ask you to be aware of:

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT:

1. **Intake procedure:** When you contact us, we will ask you if you are able/willing to complete a form sent to you by email. This is a standard form asking for information we need to treat you and will be kept confidential in accordance with our data protection policy. You can print this out and write on it if you prefer, then bring it with you to your first appointment. We will also ask you some questions regarding Covid-19 (point 3 below). A deposit of £15 will be taken by phone at the point of booking. It is not possible to admit an accompanying person unless (1) absolutely necessary e.g. a carer and (2) prior notice is given.
2. **Telephone consult:** If possible, we will try to go over your health concerns and treatment goals by phone/email *before* you arrive in order to minimize close contact. Otherwise we will complete this in clinic at a 2m distance.
3. **Exclusions:** You may NOT attend clinic if:
 - 1) You are extremely vulnerable and have been advised to shield (see <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/guidance-shielding-extremely-vulnerable-people>)
 - 2) You have symptoms of Covid-19 (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste) or have had within the past 14 days
 - 3) You are self-isolating because you have been in close contact with someone with Covid-19 within the past 14 days.

- 4) We are required to document this with a form that you can sign on arrival.
4. A day or so before your appointment we will contact you to confirm and ask if anything has changed.

ARRIVING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT:

5. **Arriving at clinic:** Try to arrive at the time of your appointment, no more than 5 minutes early. We have allocated extra time for cleaning and disinfecting the treatment area between clients, but we advise not using the waiting area as there may be other people in the building. If possible, for reasons of hygiene please **text us** on arrival (otherwise at North Belfast you may knock the door, or at Willow, East Belfast you can use the doorbell).
6. **Masks:** Government advice suggests wearing a mask where social distancing is not possible. Acupuncture professional guidelines have made this a mandatory requirement. You should arrive wearing a mask (a reusable cloth mask is sufficient). If you forget your mask, or were not able to obtain one in time, we will have disposable masks available at a cost price fee of 50p. If you have a medical reason that you cannot wear a mask please let us know.
7. **Bathroom:** We strongly recommend that you use a bathroom *before* arriving. If you need to use the bathroom please let us know, as we are required to clean and disinfect it between every user.
8. **Hygiene:** Please sanitise your hands at the earliest opportunity. Sanitising stations are available at the entrance to the clinic room and at other strategic locations in the building
9. **Social distancing:** You should respect the 2m social distancing guidelines whenever you are in the building.
10. **Make your way to the clinic room:** There is a seat just outside the acupuncture clinic room (top of the stairs at Willow) where you should:

- 1) Sanitise your hands if you have not already done so
- 2) complete and sign the screening checklist (point 3). It is a good idea to bring your own pen otherwise we will have pens available, which you can discard into a jar for later cleaning. This form is confidential as per our data protection policy.
- 3) Put on the provided face mask if you have not brought your own. Sanitise your hands before doing this.
- 4) The door will be open for you to enter when ready

11. Temperature: We will take your temperature using a non-contact infrared thermometer.

12. Consultation: We will complete the consultation at this stage before beginning your treatment. Feel free to ask questions now or later during your treatment.

13. Masks: You are expected to retain your mask during the treatment unless there is a good reason that you are not able to do so, so if you need to remove it, please let us know beforehand. You should sanitise your hands before and after touching your face mask.

14. Treatment: If you have had acupuncture before, this should be a normal treatment apart from special Covid-19 precautions. You can ask questions or tell us anything relevant to your treatment and we can discuss your goals further.

15. Post-treatment: We ask that you send us some feedback over the next few days. If you want to rebook you can do so now or by messaging us and we will respond asap. As soon as you have had a treatment with us you are a priority client for next available appointments.

16. Payment: We are moving to contactless payments. (See fees) but if you wish to pay by cash please leave it in the box provided.

17. Final comments: These procedures are in place to make us all safer during Covid-19 and are based on professional guidelines and local regulations. If you have any other questions, feel free to ask otherwise we look forward to welcoming you!