

Recommendations and Guidance: Face to Face Contact with Clients

Issued 12 May 2020

The guidance provided below has been developed and collated from a range of sources including UK Government agencies and research-specific protocols. The GCMT Covid-19 working party have carefully reviewed all available guidance to ensure that the advice below is accurate and evidence informed.

We must emphasise strongly that the guidelines, advice and information contained within this communication does not signal a return to face to face practice.

We hope this communication finds you well and safe. **It is currently unclear when a we will be able to return to work/practice**, however the GCMT has been working with its member professional associations to consider potential adjustments to practice based on Government guidelines for when this eventually happens.

The focus of this communication is to enable you to plan ahead, consider some important areas of practice and decide how best you can protect yourself and your clients.

The recommendations and guidance are in addition to normal clinical hygiene and health and safety procedures and we would strongly suggest you carry out a written risk assessment for your records of your own working environment. We will release further information over the coming weeks if Government guidelines change.

Planning for a return to face to face practice

Premises

- Prepare a [detailed risk assessment](#) include a [COSHH assessment](#)
- Prior to re-opening clinics areas, a [deep clean of the working environment](#) will be required. Source appropriate cleaning materials as soon as you can.
- Prepare signage for the working environment to highlight the new working procedures to clients. Some infographics are included at the end of this document. We will be preparing other examples for your use shortly

Client

- Consider sourcing or purchasing items that you feel may be required for re-opening i.e. [cleaning products](#), [PPE](#), contactless thermometer, plastic storage containers for clothing, alternative payment options – see later comments for suggestions
- Begin to raise awareness of the new therapy regime prior to clients' appointments (or even notify your full client base) in order to ensure compliance and to instil confidence in the client that they are in safe hands. This could be in the form of an email, social media, web site, client information leaflets etc.

Therapist

- Therapists should produce a disclaimer stating that they themselves are currently free from symptoms, have not been in contact with someone currently suffering Covid-19 or who is self-isolating. Once again, we are preparing a template you will be able to download
- We suggest therapists use the NHS Contact Tracer app when available. Encourage clients to use them too

Therapy

- Consider carrying out on-line consultations prior to the actual therapy to minimise contact time, (ensure your compliance with GDPR)
- Offer greater flexibility with Cancellation Policies in order not to deter clients from cancelling if they feel unwell
- Ensure your diary has sufficient time between appointments for thorough [sterilisation](#) of therapy room. Suggest [30 minutes](#) – to ensure clients are not present at the same time and for sterilising products to be effective
- Ensure you can maintain social distancing compliance in waiting rooms, organise staggered appointment times so only one client is in the room at a time. Remove magazines, cushions, unnecessary decorations etc.
- Use couch roll on client seating if not washable or possibly purchase hard seating
- Remove all testers or samples if retailing products
- Caution or refusal of therapy (use discretion) for clients with underlying health conditions (heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, suppressed immune systems etc.) or aged over 70. This becomes a new therapy contra-indication
- Provide a container for client's clothes and possessions which can be [sterilised](#) between appointments
- It is most important to dispose of all waste products and PPE [appropriately](#). (Be aware, you can only put disposable PPE into the householder's bin for non-recyclable waste – this typically includes aprons, gloves and masks; however, it must be stored for 72 hours before leaving for collection). Consider purchasing appropriate disposal equipment
- Be prepared to [sanitise](#) card machine buttons after use or move to a contactless payment system. If cash is the only option, leave envelopes for clients to place money in and handle only once at the end of the day, thoroughly washing hands afterwards. Consider setting up electronic payment systems such as bank transfer or PayPal.

Potential future working guidelines

We must emphasise once again that the guidelines, advice and information contained within this communication do not signal a return to face to face work.

Premises

- A risk assessment must be performed regularly and documented
- [Sterilise commonly touched surfaces](#) i.e. door handles, taps, toilet facilities (fresh hand towels or disposable towels), soap dispenser. Be mindful of contact time for sanitising products, (the time wet product must be in contact with the surface before it is effective – this can be up to 10 minutes but refer to instructions)
- Open all entrance/exit doors yourself to minimise client contamination
- Keep the clinic room well ventilated (where possible naturally) open windows, use extractor fan, etc. Do not use air-conditioning units.
- Water should not be dispensed unless in an emergency situation, clients to supply their own

Client

- Consider asking a client to take their temperature upon arrival, (with a therapist supplied contactless thermometer). This is not to diagnose Covid-19 but may suggest the client is unwell and should investigate this further. Temperature should be recorded on client's records
- A face mask may be required for clients (you may have to provide this)
- Ask the client to inform you should they show symptoms of Covid 19 post therapy at any time
- Clients should [wash](#) and [sanitise](#) their hands. Use the resources to print guidance for clients

Therapist

- [All cleaning, sterilisation and actions taken](#) must be documented in a record. Consider a simple template that can be used daily
- Based on current information we strongly recommend that therapists refrain from mobile therapy or domiciliary visits as the environment is outside of your control and may increase risk to yourselves and your clients. This advice may of course change over the coming weeks

- Do not carry out therapy if you feel unwell yourself. Take your own temperature prior to the start of each working day and document this in a daily record
- Keep personal belongings in a designated covered container that can be [sterilised](#) (to be used as a locker to keep coat, bags etc isolated)
- Use own pen, only handle documents yourself, sign disclaimers on behalf of the client etc. Client to bring their own pen
- [Wash hands/sanitise](#) before and after every client
- [PPE currently to include disposable gloves \(care with latex allergies\), plastic apron, fluid resistant mask \(IIR\)](#). PPE requirements are subject to change, please check up to date guidelines
- Putting on or [donning](#) of PPE should be performed in the correct order
- Taking off or [doffing](#) of PPE should be performed in the correct order and disposed appropriately
- Ensure good hand care to prevent skin conditions developing

Therapy

- Prepare a disclaimer/client screening statement for the client to complete prior to therapy. GCMT is working on an example of this, to follow in due course
- Ask client if they have allergies to cleaning products, latex and powder and record on their records
- Ask the client to use hand sanitiser/wash hands upon entrance and exit of your premises. If using antimicrobial gel, it must be at least 60% alcohol or effective [against coronavirus](#)
- We would recommend you do not use clinical tools, as this presents an additional layer of risk to control. However, if you choose to do so Sterilise clinical tools following use; hot stones, IASTM tools, cupping tools etc. Sterilisation must be documented.
- [Sterilise couch](#) between clients, especially face cradle (disposable covers)
- Couch covers not to be used unless they are replaced for each client
- Use fresh material covering for each client (consider using large flat cot sheets for ease of washing and drying)
- Facial massage should be avoided
- Side lying, rather than a prone massage position may be more comfortable for clients wearing face masks.
- [Put on and remove PPE as](#) recommended prior to client arriving and after they have left, in the correct order.
- Place all used laundry in a lidded container until it is [washed](#), making sure to use gloves and mask when putting washing in the machine
- All laundry needs to be washed at the highest temperature cycle for the fabric of the bedding, hand towels and uniforms

Useful Websites and Resources

Guidance for health professionals on [GOV.UK](#)

- [COVID-19: personal protective equipment \(PPE\) hub](#)
- [Infection prevention and control](#)
- [COVID-19: personal protective equipment use for non-aerosol generating procedures](#)

Guidance for non-clinical settings on [GOV.UK](#)

- [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance on social distancing and for vulnerable people](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for educational settings](#)

Risk Assessment

- [Preparing a risk assessment](#)
- [A brief guide to COSHH](#)

Infographics

[COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control](#)



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[Best Practice Hand Washing](#)



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[Best Practice Hand Rub](#)



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[Recommended PPE Additional Considerations of Covid-19](#)



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[Routine Decontamination of Reusable Non-Invasive Equipment](#)



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[PSE COVID-19 Visual Guide to Safe PPE Poster](#)



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Putting on PPE



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Removing PPE



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Others

- [COVID-19: guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#)
- [COVID-19: Social distancing in the workplace during coronavirus sector guidance](#)
- NHS PPE Guidelines
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878750/T2_poster_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_community_and_social_care_by_setting.pdf
- Infection Control for Regulated Professions
https://www.cmta.com/assets/infection_control_guidelines.pdf
- Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals
<https://www.abmp.com/back-to-practice/summary>
- Disposal of potential Covid-19 infected PPE
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#cleaning-and-disposal-of-waste>
- <https://www.britishpainsociety.org/COVID-19-Resources/>
- CSP resources
<https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus>
- CSP clinical guidance
<https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus/clinical-guidance>
- HSE guidelines
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm#>
- CIPD Returning to the Workplace Guidelines
<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/employees/workplace-guide-returning-after-coronavirus>