

Guidelines for Returning to Face-to-Face Interventions in Private Practice and Independent Clinic Settings During Phase Two of COVID-19 Pandemic Management

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**Acupuncture Association of
Chartered Physiotherapists**



Introduction

This document is designed to support the safe return to work of members of the AACP and BMAS, and has been developed with consultation with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) in line with recommendations from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the latest information from NHS and Government sources. Rather than duplicate the existing comprehensive guidelines, this document acts as a central resource and signposts clinicians to relevant links in guidelines from gov.co.uk, NHS, HSE, HCPC and the CSP. Members are advised to use these links to view or download the current appropriate documents and to view regular updates to stay informed and to receive the latest updated information. Whilst the statements in this document and the associated guidelines are as accurate as possible at the time of publication all members should be aware of the possibility of changes to best practice that may occur throughout these unprecedented times. This document and the associated guidelines address the main concerns for members as they look to return to practice and remain safe and effective in the management of face-to-face interventions in independent clinic settings during phase two of COVID-19 pandemic management. The advice is designed to support members whilst maintaining their own wellbeing as well as that of their patients and service users whilst achieving and maintaining “COVID-19 Secure” status in 2020. The document and the associated guidelines should also be viewed in collaboration with the latest AACP Safe Practice Guidelines (2020) or the BMAS Code of Practice (2018). The AACP and BMAS are committed to working closely with their partners within the healthcare regulatory bodies and NHS in supporting members throughout this period and beyond. It is advised that those members working within the NHS or in large private healthcare organisations also refer to their own relevant practice guidelines. The AACP’s clinical advisor and the BMAS Medical Director also remain available to answer any direct or specific questions that may arise beyond this document.

The Return to Face to Face Interventions

The AACP guidelines are mapped against the CSP's guidance for "*Management of face-to-face interventions in private practice and independent clinic settings during phase two of COVID-19 pandemic management.*" As some areas of the UK move into the second phase of COVID-19 pandemic management the implementation of the re-opening of some non COVID healthcare pathways are now in place. Whilst the initial stages of phase two management are not a return to normal business practices across all sectors, there is an increasing requirement for face-to-face treatments in the private and independent sectors for patients seeking physical interventions. These guidelines respond to that need to support members particularly in the independent sector but do not override the practice guidelines laid out by any organisation such as the NHS for its own working practices. The Government, HSE, NHS, HCPC and CSP guidelines provide a pathway to work within the legal, regulatory and professional frameworks that govern safe clinical practice in the context of the second phase of COVID-19 pandemic management. It is your duty as a clinical professional to remain informed and to work within your scope of practice to maintain the safety of your patients, yourself, your colleagues as well as the wider public at large.

Coronavirus Overview

For an overall view of the Government's guidance regarding Coronavirus and its ongoing management at work and the clinical setting follow the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Infection Prevention and Control

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

The NHS guidance for reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is also recommended for clinical settings outside of the NHS and reflects current best practice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/reducing-the-risk-of-transmission-of-covid-19-in-the-hospital-setting>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886668/COVID-19_Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_complete.pdf

NHS Public Information Regarding Coronavirus

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

NHS 111 online

NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service, running alongside its standard online service, which can provide advice to patients with an urgent health concern. Patients with possible COVID-19 are directed to NHS 111 online for health advice in the first instance. For NHS 111 online follow the link below:

<https://111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19>

The Health and Safety Executive

For an overall view of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance regarding Coronavirus and its ongoing management at work follow the link below:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

There is additional Coronavirus information for people and businesses in:

Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Wales

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

To ensure a practice is Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020 as it implements face to face interventions the government has highlighted five steps to maintain safer working environments. These steps are supported by guidance from the Government, the NHS and the HSE with links to the detailed information below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment and share the results with the people who work there

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

2. Have cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance.

Hand washing guidance can be found at the below link.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Government guidance on the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) can be found at the below link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#section-6>

3. Take all reasonable steps to help people work from home

- a. discussing home working arrangements
- b. ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
- c. including them in all necessary communications
- d. looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

Households with coronavirus infection

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#ending-isolation>

Staying at home

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others#eel-decline>

Stay at Home guidance for households: current guidelines illustrated

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874011/Stay_at_home_guidance_diagram.pdf

Shielding vulnerable persons

The Government has specific guidance for the shielding and protecting of people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable. This may include patients, colleagues, and family members. A complete overview of the guidance can be found at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

4. Taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace

Where possible, maintain 2m between people by:

- a. putting up signs to remind workers and visitors of social distancing guidance
- b. avoiding sharing workstations

- c. using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a 2m distance
- d. arranging one-way traffic through the workplace if possible
- e. switching to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible

5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, everything practical should be done to manage transmission risk

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, you should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:

- a. considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
- b. keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- c. using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- d. using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
- e. staggering arrival and departure times
- f. reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

Staying alert and social distancing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

The government has also provided a poster to confirm to patients that the clinic is staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97021d3bf7f5d43765cbf/staying-covid-19-secure.pdf>

The CSP have issued guidance in line with the Government recommendations for safe working during COVID-19 management. For an overview of all the CSP's guidance follow the link below:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus>

Seven key factors when undertaking decisions to return face-to-face contact with patients

In line with the CSP's guidance the AACCP recommends members consider 7 key factors when undertaking decisions to return face-to-face contact with patients or not.

1. Legal, regulatory and professional responsibilities
2. Risk assessment of the working environment for which you are responsible
3. Infection prevention and control measures
4. Access to personal protective equipment
5. 'Virtual first' approaches
6. Patient risk assessment and clinical reasoning
7. Patient consent for treatment

For the CSP's guidance on implementing face to face working and the associated downloadable PDF see the links below:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus/clinical-guidance/remote-or-face-face-consultations/implementing-guidance-england>

https://www.csp.org.uk/system/files/publication_files/Face%20to%20face%20England_webversion_18-5-20.pdf

HCPC Practice Standards

The HCPC has specific guidance for registrants on how to adapt practice and apply their standards in the context of COVID-19 in community settings

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/covid-19/advice/applying-our-standards/adapting-your-practice-in-the-community/>

Reporting of cases of COVID-19

The Health and Safety Executive have issued guidelines regarding the reporting of cases of COVID-19 as it pertains to The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (2013). These guidelines may be found at the link below:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/riddor-reporting-coronavirus.htm#>

Regulatory bodies' guidance

Regulatory bodies for specific professions have produced their own guidance and updates for practice in the context of COVID-19:

General Medical Council:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/news/news-archive/coronavirus-information-and-advice>

Nursing and Midwifery Council:

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/>

Health and Care Professions Council:

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-update/>

General Osteopathic Council:

<https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/standards/guidance-for-osteopaths/coronavirus-covid-19/>

General Chiropractic Council:

<https://www.gcc-uk.org/news/entry/gcc-updated-statement-about-chiropractic-practice-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

Summary

This document is a central resource and signposts clinicians to relevant links to pertinent guidelines from gov.co.uk, NHS, HSE, HCPC and the CSP. Members are therefore advised to use these links regularly to view or download the current appropriate documents and to view any updates to stay informed and to receive the latest information. These documents however as merely guidelines do not replace the need for clinicians to consider the individual requirements of all patients and colleagues within the clinical environment to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals at this time.