



AoR Covid-19 Preparation for returning to work and restoration of practice

This document is in line with Government advice as of the 18th May 2020 and is subject to change in response to Government Guidelines. As we move forward the most up to date documents will be placed in the members' area of the website – always check you have the current information.

The Government's* current planning assumption is that our profession will not be able to return to work until at least the 4th July, depending on several factors including the number of Covid-19 cases.

This document is purely providing information to help you to prepare for returning to work, so you can think about changes that you may need to make to be able to practice safely.

Once Government advises that we can return to work, you will then need to decide whether you believe it is the right time for you personally to return to work. Some therapists will return immediately to practice where others may choose to wait. In the same way, some clients may choose to wait a bit longer to return than others.

For some, this will mean their practice remaining closed for the foreseeable future. For others this may mean you re-open as soon as the Government says we can.

If you are working for an employer or in a voluntary capacity for an organisation, we recommend that you adhere to the AoR's guidelines and any extra guidelines beyond these required by your employer/organisation, provided that these are still within Government guidelines.

**Please be aware that guidance may be different in England, Scotland, Wales, and N Ireland and may change at any time if infection rates begin to rise.*

You will always need to consider your own health and vulnerability as well as that of those around you:

- If you, or someone in your household, are showing symptoms of the Coronavirus such as a dry cough, fever or loss of smell or taste, follow the government guidelines for self-isolation. **You will not be able to treat clients until fully recovered and all members of your household are out of the quarantine period.**
- If you have come in to contact with someone who has tested positive for the Coronavirus, please also follow the government guidelines for self-isolation. **You will not be able to treat clients at this time.**
- In line with these government guidelines, review your own health, your family's health and consider if you fall in to the vulnerable category – e.g. over 70 years of age, pre-existing medical conditions, pregnant, or immune compromised due to

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underlying health conditions. If you do, you need to be following the social distancing guidelines set out by the government. **You may not be able to treat clients at this time.**

If you are in a position to personally re-open your practice then consider the health and vulnerability of your clients. Information on this is provided in the 'Can I Treat' infographic.

Insurance

The AoR work very closely with our recommended insurance broker, Alan Boswell. If your insurance is with Alan Boswell you are covered to work, once Government advises that we can, as long as you follow the AoR Guidelines and complete a Risk Assessment before each treatment (to be provided soon). If you are insured elsewhere please check you are insured to return to work and whether there are any additional requirements.

The following is a checklist to help you think about changes that you may need to make to your practice to be Covid-19 Secure.

- a) Restoration of therapy businesses in the light of Covid-19 Government advice
- b) Extra hygiene steps required under Covid-19 considerations.

Your Place of Work

Before treating any clients, you will need to consider:

- **Travel implications** - Both yours and your client's journey to the treatment space - does it put either of you at risk?
- **Hand washing*** - Do you have access for your clients to wash their hands before treatment starts? If not you will need to provide sanitiser gel in a pump dispenser (minimum 60% alcohol).
- **Maximise space** - Can you arrange your treatment space to increase the minimum distance between you and your client?
- **Anti-viral wipes or spray** - Do you have enough to clean any hard surfaces between each client?
- **Cleaning time** - Are you able to allow 15 minutes between clients to clean all surfaces and open a window (if available)?
- **Uniforms** - Have you enough uniforms for at least daily change? You should consider whether you wish to change your uniform more frequently, especially if you feel there is a greater risk of contamination eg if someone were to sneeze near you.
- **Facial coverings** - Have you enough facial coverings to be able to use one per treatments if the government guidelines continue to recommend facial covering for close contact?
- **NHS Covid-19 Government Tracker App** - we recommend setting this up the once available.
- **Remove any non-essential items from your treatment room** - we advise that you remove any non-essential items such as ornaments, leaflets, magazines, soft furnishings to keep your work area as easy to clean as possible.

Treating Clients

What you will need to consider prior to treatments:

- **AoR Risk assessments** - Until further notice, for each client, you will need to contact them and perform the AoR Risk assessment before agreeing to conduct the treatment.
- **Facial coverings**** - at this time Government advice recommends facial coverings, so you may wish to stipulate that they provide their own face covering.
- **Payment** - Are you able to set up contactless or on-line payment in advance rather than taking payment after treatment.
- **NHS Covid-19 Tracker App** - Encourage each client to set up the (once available).

What you will need to consider for when clients arrive:

- **Maintain social distancing** - no hand-shakes or hugs.
- **Check if their health situation has changed** (*i.e. since you performed the risk assessment, have they had any Covid-19 symptoms, or been in contact with anyone with symptoms*).
- **Hand washing*** - Ask them to wash their hands when they arrive (or use a hand sanitiser with a minimum of 60% alcohol)
- **Hygiene** - Go through your normal hygiene routine (*taking particular care to wash your own hands thoroughly*).
- **Facial coverings**** - at this time Government advice recommends facial coverings in enclosed spaces so both parties should use one if possible.

What you will need to consider for the end of the treatment:

- **Hand washing*** - Offer them the opportunity to wash their hands before leaving the treatment space and wash your hands.
- **Payment** - If been made in advance then use contactless credit/debit card if possible, rather than cash.
- **Re-booking** - For a follow-up appointment confirm that you will call them beforehand to perform the AoR Risk Assessment.
- **Water** - ask your clients to bring their own bottle of water and if possible only remove mask to drink when they have left.
- **Cleaning** - Wipe down any hard surfaces your client may have touched with anti-viral wipes or spray.
- **Ventilation** - Open the door and window (if there is one) to allow air circulation.
- **Facial covering**** will need to be changed in preparation for your next client.
- **Uniform** - do you need to change your uniform before the next client?

**Hand soap and hand sanitiser should be from a pump dispenser.*

***Government advice at this time recommends that facial coverings are required in enclosed spaces. The AoR advise that both the therapist and the client wears a mask. Information from Toulouse Hospital states that this can cut the transmission by 98.5%. Ideally this should be 2 layers of cotton fabric, it does not need to be a mask as long as the mouth and nose are covered e.g. a scarf*

For further details of hygiene requirements please see AoR Covid-19 Secure Hygiene Guidelines and the AoR Covid-19 Secure Hygiene Infographic.

AoR Covid-19 resources that will be available

- General background information
- Preparation for returning to work and restoration of practice
- Secure Workplace Logo and Health and Hygiene Policy
- Scenarios for consideration
- Secure Hygiene Guidelines:
 - Secure Hygiene Guidelines – in your workplace
 - Secure Hygiene Guidelines –Home visits
 - Secure Hygiene Infographic
- Effectiveness of using a face covering
- Client Management – can I treat my client
- Client Risk Assessment
- Workplace Hygiene Checklist

Links to external sources of information

Please be aware these are the link addresses for government information as it stands today. However, link addresses change all the time.

Guidance from the NHS website including how to avoid catching and spreading the virus and hygiene: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Government updates: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Latest updates – N Ireland: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-what-situation-northern-ireland>

Latest updates – Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/>

Latest updates – Wales: <https://gov.wales/wales-response-coronavirus>

Public Health England – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – what you need to know
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

Public Health England have downloadable resources for Coronavirus (COVID 19)
<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-coronavirus-/resources>

COVID 19: Guidance for health professionals: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists have a PDF download covering Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection in Pregnancy
<https://www.rcoq.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v2-20-03-13.pdf>

Additional hygiene points to consider

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>