

BCA Board Briefing Paper

Subject Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) relating to 'Return to Work'
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Action/Information For your approval

BLUF:

This paper sets out the BCAs current position, drivers, considerations, advice and next steps regarding PPE advice after lockdown restrictions in place due to COVID-19 are lifted or eased.

BCA Position

1. The BCA has advised members not to carry out face-to-face consultations. The BCA has no statutory authority in this situation and can only advise on the basis of the precautionary principle, which is in the best interests of its members.
2. The vast majority of BCA members have their Medical Malpractice insurance provided by BCA Insurance Services. Should a scenario ever be tested legally, this will therefore involve that cover.
3. The situation is constantly changing and the advice given by the BCA needs to be regularly reviewed, particularly in light of the scheduled update to government guidelines on May 7th.
4. Due to the above positions, PPE guidance has not been provided up to this point. Given the need to be prepared for the next phase of UK Government Guidelines, the BCA has reviewed the considerations which members should make regarding PPE.
5. There is no guarantee of safety, merely mitigation of risk.

Drivers

There are five key drivers in giving advice on the PPE which may be required for face-to-face consultations after lockdown restrictions are eased:

1. We want our members, their patients, family and staff to be safe.
2. We want to support our members in returning to their vocation of helping their patients and contributing to society.

3. We want to reduce members' exposure to potential litigation and regulatory action.
4. Members may not have the support structure, training and equipment provided to front-line staff for the provision and safe use of PPE.
5. We want our members not to suffer financially any more than is absolutely necessary for their safety and those they have a duty to protect.
6. Government/Public Health England (PHE) guidance may change with little notice. For example, guidance on social distancing, lockdown restrictions and appropriate PPE etc.

Considerations

There are a number of issues which will have to be considered as part of the decision to advise members on the best course(s) of action regarding PPE when lockdown restrictions are lifted or relaxed:

1. The duty of care to staff, patients and those in their potential infection chains will continue to exist. Existing legal, regulatory and insurance obligations will continue to apply.
2. Guidance on PPE must be viewed as part of, and in conjunction with a wider 'Safe Return to Work' risk assessment and plan.
3. Government advice on PPE is changing regularly, it is difficult to accurately predict how this will next evolve. This requires a multi-scenario plan of action. There are multiple levels of guidance dependent on setting, patient classification and assessment/treatment procedures.
4. Availability of training and resources to ensure members use PPE safely and competently must be available.
5. Members using PPE must ensure it's safe disposal and have the ability to create and maintain the highest levels of infection control within clinics.
6. When considering patients' use of PPE and their suitability for care, chiropractors must assess their classification into 'possible' or 'confirmed' status relating to COVID-19.
7. Personal and clinic hygiene, including the practice of hand washing, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing and sanitisation of all equipment and surfaces.
8. The treatment of elderly/vulnerable patients involves further risk management issues.

9. Those who are 'Shielding' have been told to quarantine at least until mid-June.
10. Members have enquired about the possibility of the BCA bulk buying PPE when appropriate, we must consider the following which makes this untenable.:
 - a. Guaranteeing ethical supply
 - b. The BCA's financial risk of bulk ordering
 - c. Guaranteeing quality and technical specification
 - d. Ethical considerations regarding 'Front Line' shortages
 - e. Change in Government guidance
11. A further option on sourcing PPE would be to signpost members to recommended retailers/suppliers.
 - a. This reduces the BCA's financial risk as Government/PHE advice on PPE advice evolves and maybe less onerous
 - b. This gives greater flexibility to members in choosing their supply chain subject to their local and regional considerations.
12. Regardless of any COVID-19 testing which may have already taken place, PPE advice is unlikely to be affected.

Advice

When the Government lockdown restrictions are lifted or eased to a point where face to face consultations can be resumed, the BCA would be likely to advise its members to act with great caution in their implementation of PPE and other policies regarding safe return to work.

Further detailed advice on PPE and safe return to work is being developed and will be likely to include:

1. HR and legal support and advice such as the potential ramifications of a patient complaint and regulatory/legal action
2. What is the appropriate level of PPE?
 - a. Current Government Guidelines for members, staff and patients
 - b. Appropriate use and application of a Risk Assessment regarding PPE
 - c. Training in the safe use and disposal of PPE
 - d. How classification of a chiropractor/patient and your assessment/treatment procedures will impact the management and appropriate level of PPE
3. Advice on how to appropriately source PPE
4. Further detailed advice on return to work

- a. Social Distancing within a clinic
- b. Chiropractor and Patient Hygiene
- c. Patient Management

Next Steps

1. The Board are asked to consider this paper and discuss further additions
2. With Board agreement, we will use this note to brief members on the likely next steps regarding PPE. These will include:
 - a. Further development of 'A framework for PPE'
 - b. Continue to develop wider 'A framework for return to work' including PPE using the following:
 - i. Q&A focus group with a small number of members (time permitting)
 - ii. Consultation with external stakeholders including the GCC and RCC
 - iii. Continue interprofessional collaboration on best practice
 - c. Publication of 'A framework for PPE' - Appendix 1
 - d. Publication of 'A framework for Return to Work'