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## Introduction

The [BCA Coronavirus Hub: Preparing Return to Work](#) has numerous resources and links to assist you with a Risk Assessed return to Face to Face Consultations.

On May 11th 2020 [OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#), was published. This document describes the progress the UK has made to date in tackling the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, and sets out the plans for moving to the next phase of its response to the virus.

Based on this, our discussions with stakeholders, various healthcare professional bodies and patient groups, the BCA has regularly updated its advice to members on face to face consultations, where it is appropriate within your nation and the restrictions imposed by your devolved administration.

BCA members should perform a thorough risk assessment of their practice within the context of local and national guidelines as the first step in their decision making on how and when to return to face to face consultations. This should be completed, and mitigating actions taken prior to your decision to reopen. Whilst all nations are advised that a risk assessed approach to face-to-face consultations for cases including routine/maintenance cases is appropriate, you may wish to review our guidance on regional differences, urgent clinical need and vulnerable people..

### Regional differences

Members from across all UK Countries can keep up to date on [BCA guidance](#) for their area, as well as where to access COVID-19 information tailored to each administration.

### What is an urgent clinical need?

Considerations for what is an 'urgent clinical need' should be patient centred and defined between each individual patient and their chiropractor.

There are a great number of considerations which may deem that a patient's care is urgent. Examples of the (non-exhaustive) considerations which may apply include escalating pain and progressively worsening symptoms that do not respond to conservative management such as a Telehealth appointment or medication as expected, or symptoms which otherwise result in face-to-face contact with another healthcare provider (e.g. GP, A&E, or walk in centre).

### Vulnerable People and Shielding

The government has updated its [guidance for people who are shielding](#). This shielding guidance (22nd January 2021) applies to clinically extremely vulnerable individuals only. Others living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable are not advised to follow this guidance. They should instead follow the general advice and regulations set out in the [national lockdown guidance that came into effect on 5 January 2021](#). BCA members are advised to consider the level of risk management they take when seeing patients who have been shielding to date. You may wish to take additional measures to heighten social distancing for these patients when in the clinic.

## Who is this framework document for?

This document is useful for any chiropractor working in a private practice setting. If you are a business owner, you should be experienced in completing risk assessments for your business and this will fit into your existing assessment. If you are an associate in a business, you too have a responsibility to take an active role in risk assessment.

## Check list

After reading this document, its links and prior to resuming face to face consultations you should be able to complete the following checklist:

Issue	Requirement	Tick
Literature	Have I read and understood the following documents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Government recovery strategy document for the country in which I operate.</li> <li>● <a href="#">The UK Government's Working Safely during Coronavirus</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">NHS/PHE Guidance on Social Distancing</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">NHS PPE Guidelines</a></li> </ul>	
Health & Safety	Have I reviewed the <a href="#">Health &amp; Safety regulations</a> regarding maintaining a safe workplace for staff and visitors?	
Regulation	Have I reviewed the <a href="#">GCC Code</a> to ensure that I understand my duties regarding patient safety?	
PPE	Do I have a sustainable, ethical source of PPE to maintain the scale of consultations which I envisage?	
	Have I read the <a href="#">BCA FAQs on sourcing PPE and our supplier</a> Professional Hygiene?	
	Have I carried out adequate training on PPE with my staff?	
	Do I understand the new Government advice on the use of face coverings?	
Risk Assessment	Have I carried out a Risk Assessment using the <a href="#">BCA's Risk Assessment Framework</a> and <a href="#">Template</a> with my staff, making adjustments to my own clinical setting?	
	Have I <a href="#">watched the BCA's Q&amp;A CPD session</a> on risk assessment?	
Staff	Have I drafted detailed instructions and briefed my staff on Return to Work Protocols as I intend to implement them within my practice?	
Patients	Do I understand the current Government advice on dealing with Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people and Clinically Vulnerable people?	
	Do I have a comprehensive plan for communicating with my patients regarding risks and procedures within the clinic?	

## General Principals

### Screening and Classification

Chiropractors should, where appropriate, perform a screening/risk assessment of patients entering their clinic to ascertain whether a patient or individual meets the case definition for a 'possible' or 'confirmed' case of COVID-19 before any care episode.

What is a 'possible' case of COVID-19?

Please familiarise yourself with the [current COVID-19 case definition](#)

### Initial Risk Assessment

Initial risk assessment where possible should take place by phone, other remote triage, prior to a patient entering the premises or clinical area or at 2 metres social distance on entering. Where the chiropractor or receptionist assesses that an individual is symptomatic and meets the case definition or where the potential risk cannot be established, the BCA advises that these patients should not be offered a face to face consultation.

Chiropractors may consider performing this screening via digital means by asking all patients to visit '[Check if you have coronavirus symptoms - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)' or for patients to be asked these questions on the phone prior to attendance. This should be followed up with appropriate [patient information](#) displayed on the entrance of your clinic.

1. The BCA advises that patients classified as 'possible' or 'confirmed' cases of COVID-19 should not be offered face to face appointments at this time in line with Test and Trace requirements for these individuals to self isolate.
2. The BCA advises that patients with a cough, fever or loss of taste or smell and therefore 'possible' cases should be asked to stay at home and follow current Government guidance.
3. The BCA advises that chiropractors who are classified as 'possible' or 'confirmed' cases of COVID-19 should not be offering face to face appointments at this time, in line with Test and Trace requirements for these individuals to self isolate.
4. The BCA advises that members should screen all patients prior to their appointment to ensure that those with symptoms do not attend.

### Test and Trace

NHS test and trace information can be viewed [here](#).

### Test and Trace and GDPR

The BCA recommend that Members may wish to include a statement, within their Privacy Notice, regarding the sharing of patient contact information if asked to do so by a legitimate Test and Trace request. You may also wish to let patients know about this when they attend; it is now becoming common practice across many sectors, including healthcare and hospitality.

## Face Coverings

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 5 July 2021, the government in England has issued the document, [COVID-19 RESPONSE, SUMMER 2021](#).

From 19 July in England (subject to a review on 12 July), social distancing and face coverings will not be mandatory for the general public. Whilst the legal requirement for patients to wear face coverings is set to be lifted in all settings, the indications are that further guidance will be published. This guidance will advise that wearing a face covering will reduce your risk and the risk to others, therefore in the best interest of you, your staff, and other patients the BCA encourages you to require patients to wear face coverings (unless exempt) within your business at this time. This is not a legal requirement, but you will see businesses across various settings implementing this approach. All members are asked to regularly review your risk assessments, documenting the decisions taken.

## Ventilation

The law says employers must make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic.

[Ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

You should be maximising the fresh air in a space and this can be done by:

- [natural ventilation](#) which relies on passive air flow through windows, doors and air vents that can be fully or partially opened
- [mechanical ventilation](#) using fans and ducts to bring in fresh air from outside, or
- a combination of natural and mechanical ventilation, for example where mechanical ventilation relies on natural ventilation to maximise fresh air

There is no requirement for you to leave time/gaps between appointments beyond what you require to correctly perform your infection control procedures.

## Home Visits

The BCA has produced [guidance on face to face chiropractic appointments in a domiciliary \(home\) setting](#).

## Travel

For travel guidelines please visit:

England: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): travel corridors](#)

Scotland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): international travel and managed isolation \(quarantine\) - gov.scot](#)

Wales: [Travel: coronavirus | Sub-topic](#)

Northern Ireland: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): international travel advice](#)

## [Personal Protective Equipment](#)

Public Health England guidance on [COVID-19 personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) is regularly updated and members should check this guidance regularly.

Full details on PPE for chiropractic practice including technical specifications, sourcing and disposal can be found in "[A Framework for Personal Protective Equipment](#)"

### What PPE should I be using?

Public Health England have produced an update to their [Guidance for maintaining services within health and care settings](#) - January 2021.

After discussions with Public Health England and our Private Practice colleagues at ARMA, it is agreed that chiropractors fall into the Medium Risk pathway which includes:

Any care facility where:

- a) triaged/clinically assessed individuals are asymptomatic and are waiting a SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result OR
- b) triaged/clinically assessed individuals are asymptomatic with COVID-19 contact/exposure identified OR
- c) testing is not required or feasible on asymptomatic individuals and therefore infectious status is unknown OR
- d) asymptomatic individuals decline testing

The key principles for Infection Prevention and Control recommendations in the Medium Risk pathway can be seen on pages 30 - 34 of [Guidance for maintaining services within health and care settings](#).

### PPE Guidance

Members are therefore advised that the following PPE should be used as a minimum in all face to face consultations for normal chiropractic practice:

1. Single use disposable gloves
2. Single use disposable plastic apron
3. Sessional use Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask

The following should be considered as part of a risk assessment:

1. Single sessional use Eye/face protection

## [Performing a Risk Assessment](#)

Full details on performing a Risk Assessment for chiropractic practice including resources to help, information on who should be involved and how often a Risk Assessment should be done can be found in "[A framework for a Risk-Assessed Return to Face to Face Consultations V3](#)".

## [Associated Legislation](#)

Please note that this guidance is of a general nature and that all members should consider the specific conditions of each individual place of work and comply with all applicable legislation, including the [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#).

## [References](#)

BCA Paper: 'To Close or Not to Close' dated 3 April 2020

BCA Paper: 'A Framework for PPE V3 ' issued 3 August 2020

BCA Paper: 'A Framework for a Risk Assessed return to F2F Consultations V3' issued 3 August 2020

BCA Paper: 'A Template for Risk Assessment' issued 12 May 2020