



GUIDELINES FOR LOCKDOWN

**Guidance for the Safe Practice during
Lockdown 2 for
Soft Tissue Therapists**

5th November 2020

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Introduction

This document outlines the work guidelines for Soft Tissue Therapists in England following the release of [The Health Protection Coronavirus Regulation \(No.4\)](#) which sets in law restrictions and exemptions pertaining to the second National Lockdown, this guidance supersedes all previous guidance documents but itself is superseded by Statutory Regulations
All changes implemented must be documented on your Risk Assessment.

Insurance

Before re-starting work ensure your insurance is valid and will cover you for eventualities related to COVID-19. If you hold Balens Block insurance through ISRM you are already covered. However, if you do not hold insure through ISRM then you must get in touch with your own insurer to confirm you are fully insured for eventualities related to COVID-19.

General

ISRM members, who by definition are qualified at Level 4 and Level 5 will be able to continue providing Face to Face appointments if there is a health need such as for the specific treatment of injury and pain.
Triage

Face to Face appointments and treatments are agreed in collaboration with the client only after a remote online screening and history taking process which shall include video. Following this consultation it may be deemed necessary for a Face to Face appointment but not in all circumstances.

Face to Face appointments and treatments may be deemed necessary if they would prevent escalation of a condition which may require access to NHS services, or which will have a dramatic detrimental effect on daily living

Infection control Training

This guidance is based on [Public Health England \(PHE\) Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Protocols for Medium Risk environments](#). Training in IPC and PPE must be undertaken through [World Health Organisation courses](#) or equivalent and documented

Operating Procedures

Operate an appointment-only system.

Clients shall be screened for COVID-19 symptoms at time of appointment through an electronic/online form or through verbal screening, results of which shall be recorded on the Client notes.

A Consultation and Intake Form can be electronically sent ahead of the appointment to minimise the time spent in the room with your Client. Please find templates in Appendix.

Clients to arrive at the time of their appointments to avoid people in waiting areas.

Face to Face appointment times must be kept to the absolute minimum, no exceeding 45 min.

General Health

Therapists

If you or any member of your household has symptoms of COVID-19 or you have been in touch with a known positive case or been contacted by the Test and Trace team and advised to self-isolate, you shall

self-isolate in accordance with [Government Guidelines](#), along with all household members, and follow the given advice. You must cancel all appointments until test results have been confirmed and/or your period of isolation has been completed.

Clients

When making the appointment, you shall screen if the Client or any member of their household have symptoms of COVID-19, whether they or any member of their household have been in contact with a positive case, if they or any member of their household have been advised to self-isolate or if they have come back from a country not on the UK travel corridor and therefore they are required to self-isolate.

If the answer is yes to any of the above, then treatment cannot commence until an isolation period in line with Government Guidance has been completed and the client confirms they are symptom free.

On entry to your premises for their appointment you shall screen again following the process outlined in Appendix. If there is any doubt that the client **has COVID19 or been in contact with someone who has the virus**, then the treatment shall be cancelled until a period of isolation has taken place in line with Government Guidelines.

Although not possible during hands-on treatment, at other times (eg consultation process, note taking, exercise advice) every effort shall be made to maintain social distancing.

A signed declaration between the Client and Therapist will be required before the treatment to confirm the Client is free of Covid symptoms and that they have had the opportunity to ask all the questions about, and all of their questions have been answered to their satisfaction. They understand that although all reasonable steps to reduce risk of infections have been taken, including screening potential Covid-19 cases and undertaking increased hygiene and distancing protocols there may still be a risk of infection from face to face treatments.

Please see Appendix

Test and Trace

If anyone in the Therapist's household has been identified as having to self-isolate, via the Test and Trace Team, all treatments shall cease and follow Test and Trace or your [Local Public Health England](#) advice.

When the Client makes the appointment, they need to confirm that they and all members of their household have not been contacted by the Test and Trace team and advised to self-isolate.

If there is a local outbreak / lockdown, your clinic shall follow the advice of the Local Authorities.

It is a legal requirement **to ask** every customer and visitor for the following

- the name of the client or visitor.
- a contact phone number for each. If a phone number is not available, you should ask for their email address instead, or if neither are available, then postal address
- date of visit, arrival time and, **where possible**, departure time as this will help reduce the number of customers or staff needing to be contacted by NHS Test and Trace. It is recognised however that recording departure times will not always be practicable therefore this is not required by law.
- the name of the assigned staff member, if in multi-practitioner settings

These details should be collected through scanning the QR Code at the entrance of your premises or through your usual paper or booking system.

Clinic

No unnecessary 'clutter' shall be present on surfaces within the clinic. For example, towels, tape, couch roll and exercise equipment shall not be stored openly. Items are to be placed in storage cupboards, plastic containers or removed from the treatment room. No reading materials such as magazines shall be provided in Client waiting areas.

Towels and couch cover shall be changed and washed **at 60 degrees** between each Client. If these cannot be washed immediately, they must be placed either in a sealed plastic bag or storage box and marked 'Dirty Do Not Use'.

The couch shall be wiped clean using an anti-bacterial or other disinfectant product between each Client even if a couch cover has been used. Please note that recommended product 'contact time' must be followed for all cleaning/disinfectant solutions/products

Alternatively, the Therapist could choose not to use a couch cover, however it will lead to a shorter life of the outer couch fabric and if it's a two or three sectioned couch it will be more difficult to clean down after use.

A minimum **gap of 30 minutes** between each Client shall be observed and, during this time, a window and the door to the treatment room shall be opened to improve air flow, thus reducing the risk of any residual airborne contamination being present.

Between each client all door handles on the access/egress route, handrail (if stairs are used), window latch and massage lotion container shall be wiped clean using an anti-bacterial cleaner.

If fitted, ventilation into the building should be optimised to ensure the maximum fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the Clinic. Fans can be used to improve ventilation within the Clinic.

The floor of the clinic shall be cleaned at the end of the working day.

The Therapist shall change and launder their clothes at the end of the shift. It is recommended that a check sheet for a cleaning schedule is produced when the treatment room is used by more than one Therapist.

The Therapist shall ensure background noise is minimised to avoid talking loudly (ie playing music loudly) and shall minimise talking when not required. This is to reduce spital which could contain the virus if present.

Disposable or single use towels shall be provided in bathrooms that the client may use. If the Client visits the bathroom during the treatment, all touch points shall be wiped clean.

Use of PPE

Use of Face Visor/ Type IIR Face Masks

It is mandatory to wear a Type IIR face mask and in addition, when hands on treatment takes place a face visor shall also be worn in accordance with the [PHE Infection Prevention and Control Protocols](#)

In the UK clients must wear face covering in indoor places as it is a requirement by law it is therefore recommended that you control the entry of your Client to your premises and ensure your Client has a

suitable face covering and they sanitise their hands when entering your premises. Good hand hygiene shall be observed when donning and doffing the face covering.

If the Client has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering additional controls shall be put into practice. For example, not working around the neck or face, reduced treatment times, increased fresh air/ventilation.

You must avoid touching your face and face mask. Before removing your face mask hands shall be washed or hand sanitiser used.

If it's a single-use face mask it shall be safely disposed of.

The face visor shall be wiped clean between Clients using normal cleaning products.

Gloves

Gloves shall be worn when contact with client is made and changed immediately after each client and/or after completing a hands on intervention. Gloves must not be washed or sanitised for reuse they must be single use.

Hands shall be washed and sanitised before putting on and after removing gloves.

Aprons

Aprons shall be worn when providing direct care within 2 metres of the client and should be disposed after each client.

Hand Washing / Hand Sanitiser

Before the Client arrives, the Therapist shall wash hands. When the Client arrives, they shall sanitise their hands prior to entering the premises. The Therapist shall again wash or sanitise their hands directly before starting the Treatment.

The Therapist shall again wash their hands and forearms up to the elbow straight after contact with client is finished.

When the Client leaves, both parties shall either wash or use hand sanitiser on their hands. Before removing face masks, hand sanitising or hand washing shall be conducted.

Multi-room settings should consider having posters reminding staff to wash/sanitise their hands.

Additional Controls for Multiple Room Clinic Settings

When making bookings, you must avoid appointments that 'cross over', thus reducing social distancing issues and potential cross contamination.

Keep control of the main entrance to your premises – this is to ensure you can control who is present within your Clinic. This may include keeping the front door locked until you are ready to receive Clients. This will also enable you to perform the pre-treatment checks.

Open internal doors of clinic to improve airflows with the exception of Fire Doors (unless they have approved self-closers synchronised with the fire alarm) and treatment rooms.

Consider signage to encourage social distancing and hand-washing reminders.

In multiroom setting, ensure there is a register of which shifts each therapist worked.

Home Visits/Mobile Settings

Home Visits and Mobile settings are not allowed at the moment. Review will take place from 2nd December

Home Clinics

Working from Home is permitted only if there is separate access and no shared space and facilities with the household.

Treatment

Face to Face appointments and treatments may be deemed necessary if they would prevent escalation of a condition which may require access to NHS services, or which will have a dramatic detrimental effect on daily living

Face to Face appointment times must be kept to an absolute minimum for the required treatment reason without exceeding 45 min

Massage must not be the main focus of the Soft Tissue Therapy appointment.

Massage for relaxation and as a regular maintenance treatment is not permitted during this lockdown

Payment

The Client should pay for treatments either by bank transfer, card or payment link. Exchange of cash should be avoided if possible. If cash is transferred, hands shall be washed/sanitised after transaction. If a card machine has been used it shall be wiped down after use.

Clients in the 'At Risk' Group

The new [national restrictions from 5 November](#), which apply to everyone, mean no one must leave or be outside of their home, except for limited purposes, which are set out in that guidance.

The Government is advising [clinically extremely vulnerable people](#) to stay at home as much as possible, except to go outdoors for exercise or to attend essential health appointments. At this time while the rate of infection is growing exponentially ISRM advises to not treat face to face people on the list considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

Frequently asked questions

Insurance	If you are not insured through ISRM with Balens please check with your own insurer that you will be covered
What are the recommended courses regarding PPE? Are these a requirement or a recommendation?	Training in IPC and PPE must be undertaken through <u>World Health Organisation courses</u> or equivalent and documented
Can I still work from home during lockdown?	Only if your clinic is totally separate from your home. You cannot practice from home if to reach your clinic space the client has to enter or/and walk through a space that other members of the household have access to.
Can I still continue to work if my treatment room/premises is within a gym, leisure centre, beauty salon or hairdressers?	Only if access can be arranged with the owner of the facility. The facility must only be used for healthcare purposes.
Am I allowed to continue offering mobile treatments?	I am afraid not until further notice
Can I work in a clinic premises if it <i>isn't</i> owned/run by an AHP (Physio/osteo/chiro)? For example a sports therapy or soft tissue therapy led clinic.	As an ISRM member you are trained at level 4 and 5 which involves a degree of Clinical Reasoning Process therefore you are an autonomous practitioner who can clinically evaluate client's needs.
What is allowed during a treatment and is there a recommended maximum time for appointments?	<p>Massage as Relaxation, as Maintenance or as Regular Treatment is NOT allowed.</p> <p>Massage should not be the main focus of the Soft Tissue Therapy Appointment</p> <p>Any therapeutic intervention that doesn't involve touching the client for a prolonged amount of time is acceptable (MET are a good alternative as they can also be performed while client is dressed)</p> <p>As Soft Tissue Therapists we provide more than just massage and we have a strong role also in advice and exercise based rehabilitation</p> <p>Time should be kept to an absolute minimum and certainly no more than 45 min</p>
What PPE do I need to wear now? Has the advice changed?	<p>You need to follow PHE IPC protocols which requires you to wear per each client the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type IIR Mask • Gloves (only when touching the client) • Apron • Visor or Goggle (only when touching the client)
Can ISRM students continue to log their practical hours during lockdown?	Yes if they practice only on members of their households. Students cannot practice at the moment Massage on non household members

<p>How do I assess the clinical need to justify a treatment during this time?</p>	<p>As a level 4/5 practitioner you have the Clinical Skills to assess your clients needs. If your client is suffering from pain and injury which you assess will be dramatically detrimental to their daily living activities and/or that they will require the client to access Gp or NHS services then it is acceptable to see them for face to face treatment.</p>
<p>Which PA advice should I follow if I'm a member of more than one?</p>	<p>You need to follow the PA advice through which you are insured from</p>
<p>Why does the advice vary between the different PA's?</p>	<p>Because each association has a different set of members and professions they represents. We as ISRM are very lucky as our members are all qualified within our schools so we have a consistent baseline of training</p>
<p>Am I able to see new clients? If so, what procedures should I follow?</p>	<p>Yes. Procedures as per above.</p>
<p>How do I triage clients?</p>	<p>As you would in your normal Consultation. If you pick up any Red Flag then you implement appropriate referral pathway. If no red flags you will assess if the need of treatment is deemed necessary. This process needs to be completed through Telehealth by video call.</p>



Client full name	Phone number
Date and time of visit	Therapist

Covid-19 Screening		
Q1. Have you ever been tested for Covid-19?	Yes	No
Q2. Have you ever tested positive for Covid -19?	Yes	No
Q3. If yes, were you hospitalised?	Yes	No
Q4. Are you currently taking medication for Covid-19?	Yes	No
If you have answered Yes to either Q3 or Q4, treatment can proceed once GP approval has been granted.		
Q5. Have you or any of your household been in contact with a confirmed positive case in the last 14 days?	Yes	No
If yes, the treatment should be postponed for 14 days		
Q6. Have you or any of your household been contacted by the Test and Trace Team and advised to self-isolate?	Yes	No
If yes, the treatment can only take place once the period of self-isolation has been completed.		
Q7. Do you or any member of your household currently have any of the symptoms of COVID-19?		
High temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)	Yes	No
New, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)	Yes	No
Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to usual	Yes	No
If the answer is yes to any of the above, then treatment cannot commence until an isolation period in line with Government Guidance has been completed and you can confirm you are symptom free.		
Q8. Are you considered to be in the High-Risk Group that was shielding?	Yes	No
If yes, please be aware that you are at higher risk of severe consequences from Covid-19 infection and the therapist has the right to refuse treatment.		
Q9. Have you returned from abroad and required to isolate?	Yes	No
If yes, the treatment can only take place once the period of self-isolation has been completed.		

Consent Declaration for Face to Face Appointments during Covid-19

The information I have given in this form is honest, accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge. I have had the opportunity to ask all the questions about its content, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I appreciate that although all reasonable steps to reduce risk of infections have been taken, including screening potential Covid-19 cases and undertaking increased hygiene and distancing protocols there may still be a risk of infection from face to face treatment. I knowingly and willingly consent for Face to Face appointment to take place.

Client Signature

Date

Data Protection Policy

"The Clinic fully complies with the most up to date Data Protection Policy and has a transparent approach to Data Processing which empowers individuals to know about the collection and use of their personal data. We collect data for ensuring we have the right information for assessing your suitability to treatment, for completing the appropriate treatment, for contacting you regarding appointment follow-ups and for a referral to GP or other healthcare practitioners if deemed necessary. Your data may be viewed by clinic staff to ensure continuity of care is given and for standards clinic running purposes. In addition, the data will also be shared with NHS Trace and Test if asked as this is mandatory. The Therapist has the right to refuse treatment if such data cannot be collected. We collect only data that is relevant to those purposes, and we keep it for 7 years. All information held will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be released to any other external party with the consent of the client." I have read The Clinic's Data Protection Policy and consent to The Clinic processing records as outlined above and understand that I can withdraw my consent on the processing of data at any time.

Client Signature

Date

I have read and agree the Consent Declaration and the Data Protection Policy above

Signed Therapist		Signed Client		Date	
				Time in	
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