

Adapting Practice and Mitigating risk – Covid 19 return to face to face appointments

We have assessed our practice for risks outlined and put in additional processes as detailed below

Undertaken a risk assessment	02/01/21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This risk assessment will be reviewed whenever there are changes in Government guidance, or advice from GOsC or Institute of Osteopathy or if situations arise in clinical practice which indicate a review.
Heightened cleaning regimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinic rooms will be cleaned between each patient Common areas/washrooms will be cleaned at lunchtime and the end of the day and after patient use Hard surface in common areas will be cleaned at lunchtime and the end of the day
Increased protection measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All linens removed from treatment tables. Decluttering of treatment room to leave surfaces free for easier cleaning and disinfecting Contactless payments/online payments encouraged. Card machine disinfected after each use. Cash placed in box and not touched for 72 hours. Wash hands after handling. Staff and patient PPE
Put in place distancing measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggered appointments times Longer breaks between appointments so no cross over of patients No waiting in reception – wait outside for appointment at social distance from other people Redistribution of furniture in treatment room
Staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct handwashing technique best practice displayed on posters for osteopaths and patients. Posters and video instruction for putting on/removal of PPE safely All practitioners to receive copy of new policies and procedures.

**Providing remote/
telehealth consulta-
tions**

- All patients will have online pre-screening. No entry to clinic without its completion. Patients who are unable to complete the screening form online will either be called the day before or will be asked the questions at the clinic door (at a distance) before being allowed entry.
- Video appointments available for those patients who don't require face to face appointments

Table 2a. Protection of staff and patients before they visit, and when in, the clinic.

We have assessed the following areas of risk in our practice and put in place the following precautions

	Description of risk	Mitigating action
Pre-screening for risk before public/patients visit the clinic	Risk of patient with Covid-19 infection attending clinic and transmitting the virus through close contact with osteopath and surfaces at the clinic	<p>The day before a booked appointment, patients will receive a screening form regarding any recent symptoms, contacts or travel, in line with current guidance. This procedure will be detailed on the on-line bookings page and confirmation emails.</p> <p>The pre-screening questionnaire also checks that the patient understands the risks of attending the clinic for treatment.</p> <p>Screening questions prior to attending an appointment (and chaperone, if relevant) may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening for any symptoms of COVID 19 (high temperature or a new, persistent cough or anosmia) in the last 10 days. • Screen to see if a member of their household had/has symptoms of COVID-19 or are in a high-risk category i.e. shielded as considered extremely clinically vulnerable? • Have they been in contact with someone with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 in last 14 days? <p>For new patients and those who have not attended clinic since reopening in June, the questionnaire included additional information and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening for extremely clinically vulnerable patients • Screening for additional respiratory symptoms or conditions e.g. hay fever, asthma etc • Screening for inability to wear a mask <p>Other information to be provided during the screening process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform of the risk of face to face consultation which will necessarily involve direct contact– staff must document that they have informed the patient of risk associated with attending the clinic, and that they are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. • Options for telehealth • Where they can access our full risk assessment and mitigation action plan. <p>Appointment confirmation e-mails and reminders will detail the patient’s responsibilities and what to expect.</p> <p>Pre screening triage will be recorded in the notes and stored in forms attached to the patient’s notes</p>

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	Description of risk	Mitigating action
Protecting members of staff	Due to direct contact with patients, there is a risk of transmission of Covid-19	Osteopaths and other therapists will be responsible for self-monitoring their symptoms and following test, trace and isolate procedures where applicable. Osteopaths will wear PPE, patients will be provided with masks and strict hand hygiene and infection control procedures will be followed.

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	Description of risk	Mitigating action
Confirmed cases of COVID 19 amongst staff or patients	Risk of pre- or symptomatic transmission of covid-19 between patient and osteopath	<p>If a practitioner develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, they need to self isolate for a minimum of 10 days as advised on gov.uk/coronavirus and follow the flowchart describing return to work following a SARS-CoV-2 test.</p> <p>Provided the practitioner was wearing the prescribed PPE, the risk to patients is minimised. However, as a courtesy, we will inform patients that their practitioner has developed symptoms of COVID-19 - even if the risk of infection is very small - as the vulnerability of the patient and their close relatives may be an important factor for the patient to consider.</p> <p>Following current NHS guidance, any patients seen in the 2 days prior to the osteopath developing symptoms do not need to self-isolate, provided they themselves have no symptoms. They should, however, take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they develop symptoms they should seek testing and they, and the rest of their household, should isolate. • If they do not develop symptoms, they do not need to self isolate. If the osteopath tests positive, they will be notified by NHS Test & Trace if they need to isolate. <p>If a patient notifies the clinic that they have developed symptoms within 2 days of attending an appointment, the osteopath does not need to isolate, provided they were wearing appropriate PPE. This is detailed in the iO guidance. https://www.iosteopathy.org/covid-19/faq/</p> <p>For patients that have been seen by the treating practitioner during the period between seeing the suspected case and it being reported to the clinic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the practitioner who has been in direct contact has been wearing PPE in line with the guidance, there is no requirement to inform patients that have been seen by the treating practitioner in the 2 days since seeing the initial patient. • However, as a courtesy, we will inform patients that they we have seen someone who has subsequently experienced symptoms - even if the risk of infection is very small - as the vulnerability of the patient and their close relatives may be an important factor for the patient to consider.

Table 2a. Protection of staff and patients before they visit, and when in, the clinic.

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	Description of risk	Mitigating action
Travel to and from the clinic	Potential risk of contact with Covid-19 during journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All practitioners working at the clinic travel by private car or walk. Wearing masks and social distancing must be adhered to on public transport. Part of the screening of patients should include their journey to their appointment. This is another risk that will need to be considered when deciding if a face to face appointment is appropriate.
Entering and exiting the building	risk of transmission of the virus from outside the clinic to inside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will change into uniform when they arrive at work. At the end of day they will change out of it and place in a pillowcase within a plastic bag to be taken home to launder. Patients will wait outside until called in for treatment. They must observe social distancing while waiting. Patients will be asked to place all personal belongings in a designated box, sanitise their hands and don a mask and upon entering the clinic. There will be a clinical waste bin by the exit door for this disposal of used masks.
Reception and common areas	risk of transmission of virus from person to person or by contacting surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients will not be permitted to wait in reception Contactless / online payments will be encouraged. Cashed must be placed in a box and not touched for 72 hrs and hands washed after handling. The clinic has no receptionist and payments and bookings are taken by individual practitioners in treatment rooms. Poster on washroom door asking patients to notify practitioner if they use the washroom to allow for disinfecting of all surfaces. Poster in washroom to remind everyone to close the toilet lid before flushing to reduce risk of faecal aerosols being dispersed.

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	Description of risk	Mitigating action
Social/physical distancing measures in place	risk of spread of Covid-19 between people if social distancing is not maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staggered appointments times • Longer breaks between appointments so no cross over of patients/osteopaths • No waiting in reception – wait outside for appointment at social distance from other people. • Practitioners to socially distance during breaks • During case history taking we will set the room up to allow social distancing, for all but the physical hands on aspects of treatment.
Face to face consultations (in-clinic room)	risk of transmission of virus from person to person or by contacting surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment times lengthened to 45 minutes for returning patient and 1 hour 15 minutes. This will allow at least 15 minutes for cleaning and ventilation of the room between patients. • Osteopath to consider techniques and positions to use to minimise droplet/aerosol generation and proximity of osteopath and patient faces. • We will encourage only one parent/guardian with visits for children • No additional family members except if requested as a chaperone/interpreter • Chaperones required to complete screening questionnaire prior to appointment too and stored with patient notes. • Patients asked to come dressed in sports kit or similar to reduce the need to undress for treatment - this will allow for patient modesty and warmth and reduce the potential 'wafting' of virus. • Use of online notes and exercise prescription software to eliminate the need for paper and pens.

Table 2b Hygiene measures

We have assessed the following areas of risk in our practice and put in place the following heightened hygiene measures

	Description of risk	Mitigating action	When introduced
Increased sanitisation and cleaning	risk of virus transmission via contact with surfaces	<p>Disinfecting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treatment room - plinth, desk, door handles, equipment, chairs - between each patient. Used cloths to be placed in plastic bag for transporting and washing. • card machines after every use • use of at least 60% alcohol sanitisers/ anti viral sprays / wipes (eg Zoflora) • washroom after use <p>Actions to minimise the number of surfaces requiring cleaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove unnecessary linen/use plastic pillows that can be cleaned between patients etc. • Decluttering the clinic rooms and waiting area on unnecessary items • Practitioner to open doors etc 	
Aeration of rooms	risk of virus droplets remaining in the air and increasing infection risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving the clinic room door open for 15 minutes after each patient with the external door open for increased ventilation. • Weather permitting the rear door to the clinic will be left open to increase ventilation. • Use of air conditioning unit permitted under iO guidance as vents externally. 	
Staff hand hygiene measures	risk of virus transmission from practitioner to patient and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bare below the elbow/hand washing before and after patients with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, including forearms/use of hand sanitiser gel/ use of gloves • suggested that good quality handcream to be used at end of each session to reduce risk of dermatitis which could cause open wounds on hands 	

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	Description of risk	Mitigating action	When introduced
Respiratory and cough hygiene	risk of droplet transmission of the virus	Communication of cough hygiene measures for staff and patients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' posters • Provision of disposable, single-use tissues and waste bins (lined and foot-operated) • Hand hygiene facilities available for patients, visitors, and staff • Wearing of type IIR masks by both practitioner and patient. • PHE/iO guidance is only for the use of visors on a risk assessed basis where there is a risk of transmission of bodily fluids; however practitioners will wear them during times when the infection rate is high locally as an extra precaution. 	
Cleaning rota/regimes	virus transmission via surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning rota frequency increased to half-day • A written record of cleaning time and by whom • Sign asking patients to notify practitioner if they use the toilet so that surfaces can be disinfected. 	

Table 3. Personal Protective Equipment: Detail here your policy for use and disposal of PPE

Clinicians will wear the following PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-use nitrile gloves and wipeable PVC apron with each patient – all patients • Fluid-resistant surgical masks (or higher grade) – osteopaths for all treatments/contacts <2m • Eye protection, e.g. if there is a risk of droplet transmission or fluids entering eyes i.e. supine thoracic HVT, MET and during times when the infection rate is high locally
When will PPE be replaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gloves after each patient • apron will be disinfected after each patient • Masks worn for a maximum of 4 hours, but most likely after each patient or when potentially contaminated, damaged, damp, or difficult to breathe through
Reception staff will wear the following PPE	N/A

Patients will be asked to wear the following PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple layer surgical masks, provided by us. Not fabric face coverings during periods when the infection rate is high locally. Any patients who are unable to wear a mask will be offered a remote appointment.
PPE disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE and all wipes/couch roll/cleaning paper placed immediately into lidded pedal bins. On disposal, tie bag and place into second bag. • Double-plastic bagged and left for 72 hours before disposal in ordinary waste collection by local authority.

Table 4. Communicating with patients: Detail here how you will advise patients of measures that we have taken to ensure their safety and the policies that have been put in place in our clinic

Publishing your updated clinic policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy available on request in clinic • Provide as part of appointment confirmation and reminder emails (link to website) • Available on website • Social media • Video on social media and newsletter and website • Newsletter
Information on how you have adapted practice to mitigate risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating of website • Social media posts • Email to patient base <p>Reviewed and updated in line with changes in government, regulatory body, IO advice or sooner if required due to a situation arising in the course of practise.</p>
Pre-appointment screening emails containing questionnaire and appointment instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent out day before appointment • To be reviewed the evening before or at the start of the clinic session by the clinician to identify any possible errors or concerns
Information for patients displayed in the clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door notices advising anyone with symptoms not to enter the building. • Notices on other public health measures e.g. hand washing/sanitising/Catch-it, bin it kill • iO infographics on adapting practice and PPE
Other patient communications	<p>Ask patients to contact us if they develop symptoms within 2 days of visiting the clinic and advise them that we will contact them if an osteopath develops symptoms or tests positive within 2 days of their appointment.</p>