

Coronavirus COVID-19

Guidance and resources for members

July 2021

PTUK advises all members to keep up to date with the latest advice on the pandemic.

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/>

PTI members should follow local regional advice

Update

The COVID-19 restrictions are changing, we are advised to be cautious while managing the risks as the infection rates of COVID-19 remain high.

In England - From 19 July 2021

England has moved to Step 4 of the roadmap. We are advised that we should remain cautious while managing the risks because cases of COVID-19 remain high. [Find out what you should do to protect yourself and others](#). In England the mandatory requirement to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces has ended. But Government guidance states it “expects and recommends” the continued wearing of masks in crowded areas.

From 16 August

If you are fully vaccinated or under 18, you will not need to self-isolate following close contact with someone who has COVID-19. You will still need to take a PCR test and self-isolate if it is positive.

In Scotland - From 19 July 2021

All of Scotland has moved to Level 0. [Read the rules for Scotland on GOV.SCOT](#). Masks must still be worn in shops and on public transport, in pubs and restaurants when not seated. Physical distancing outdoors within a social grouping of 15 people is removed (but a requirement to maintain 1 metre from all others) and physical distancing for indoor public places is reduced to 1 metre. There are still some restrictions in place for close contact services.

9 August

All major COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted if the necessary conditions on vaccination and harm reduction continue.

In Wales - From 17 July 2021

Wales moves to alert level 1. Up to 6 people can meet indoors. Organised indoor events can take place for up to 1,000 people seated or 200 standing. There are no limits on the numbers of people who can gather outdoors. Up to 30 children from organisations can go to residential centres over the summer holidays. [Read more about alert level 1 on GOV.WALES](#). Masks are still a legal requirement in all public indoor areas, apart from when seated to eat or drink.

7th August 2021

Guidance will be reviewed to move to alert level zero, masks will still be required in most public places and on public transport.

In Northern Ireland

Although many coronavirus restrictions have eased, regulations and guidance remain in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Read the [guidance on current restrictions on nidirect](#).

Restrictions will be further reviewed on 22 July 2021, if approved, from 26 July 2021 face coverings will no longer be compulsory in places of worship, or for students in school classrooms. Face coverings will still need to be worn on public transport, in shops and hospitality venues.

Reviewing the current guidance.

The key to how we are moving out of the pandemic has been the vaccination programme.

Each Region has their own timeframe for the roll out of this programme, consult your local guidance for more information. The vaccine is helping to reduce the impact of COVID-19 when adults test positive, adults are often experiencing milder symptoms, in many cases reducing the need to be hospitalised.

The vaccination does not stop the spread of COVID-19.

The Government guidance is there to support you to work and keep safe during the pandemic. You should continue to interpret and apply the guidance as appropriate, ensuring you are complying with all relevant information.

Although restrictions have or are ceasing in some regions PTUK/PTI are advising to move forward cautiously, and although the wearing of face coverings is no longer a mandatory requirement, the Government advises us to continue wearing them when in crowded and enclosed spaces.

Social distancing of 1 meter has also been removed in England.

Maintain good ventilation in rooms and continue to operate good hygiene and cleaning routines.

Clinical working

Play Therapy comes under the category of essential worker and is also considered a close contact service due to the nature of working alongside our clients.

The main way of spreading COVID-19 is through close contact with an infected person. When someone with COVID-19 breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release particles (droplets and aerosols) containing the virus that causes COVID-19. These particles can be breathed in by another person.

Risk assessment

PTUK advises you to develop or review your risk assessment taking into consideration the current information for your region.

Employers, self-employed and trainees are responsible for undertaking a risk management approach to mitigate risk as much as possible to protect yourself, your clients, and any adults you come into contact with. PTUK would encourage you to discuss your decision-making process within clinical supervision.

Risk Assessment Factors to consider

- Insurance: are there any changes you need to be aware of with your cover.
- Hygiene, hand sanitising, disposing of used tissues
- Face masks, visors, and shields
- Ventilation
- Cleaning the space, you are working from, equipment and resources including sand and puppets.
- Managing all the therapeutic tool kit equipment and resources, Consider:
 - If moving back to using one therapeutic tool kit, how you will clean the items between session.
 - If you will continue to use individual kits for your clients
 - How will you manage sand which cannot be easily cleaned between sessions?
- Clients – safety do they have any underlying health concerns which you should factor into your risk assessment?
- Therapists – safety, any underlying health considerations
- Vaccination
- Maintaining Lateral Flow Testing Regular testing could identify more positive cases and protect you and your workspace.

Face coverings, visors, transparent face coverings.

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The Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport. In all schools and FE providers, Gov.uk guidance recommends that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms e.g., corridors and busy areas.

Working in Schools

If working in school, in England Government guidance has seen the removal of “class/year group bubbles”, meaning staff, visitors and children will freely be able to move around the school. Assemblies and singing are also able to resume from September. The final decision of how schools will operate will be informed by the Head Teacher and School Governors, it will be important to communicate with your school to ensure you are aware of their operating procedures which might impact on your use of your therapeutic tool kit and session times

Private Practice

Therapists working from their own homes will also need to consider:

1. Complete a health and safety Risk Assessment that includes the risk from COVID-19 – include adequate ventilation, sufficient cleaning, and good hand hygiene (see above)
2. Management of your therapeutic tool kit (see above)
3. Get vaccinated
4. Test twice a week, where you are offering sessions from within your home your family should also be using the rapid lateral flow tests twice a week.
5. Procedure if you or someone in your home tests positive for COVID-19

PTUK has previously published the following guidance to enable you to consider how to safely practice.

- Procedure for resuming Play Therapy June 2020
- FAQ resuming practice Sept 2020
- Webinar Returning to Play Therapy Practice during COVID-19
- FAQ following webinar Returning to Play Therapy Practice during COVID-19
- December 2020 Update
- January 2021 Update
- April 2021 Update
- June 2021 Update – restrictions, Private Practice

We encourage you to revisit the above guidance which you will find on PTUK's website, keep abreast of Government guidance for your region, review your current risk assessment and discuss your decision making within Clinical Supervision.

Additional queries regarding working during the COVID-19 pandemic, contact Eileen at clinical@ptukorg.com