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COVID 19 (CORONAVIRUS) UPDATE – 26th June 2020

COSRT is very sympathetic to the challenges facing Members considering their return to in-person therapy provision. Individuals must consider fully often complex public health, ethical and moral issues that a return would bring.

The Government is, and will remain, the key source of guidance related to Covid-19, alongside local authority bodies which have at times provided more tailored information. The primacy of government is highlighted, for example, by the decision to reduce social distancing protocols from 2 metres to a 1 metre plus rule from 4 July allowing for certain businesses to resume trading.

We recognise that relaxing of the social distancing measures offers potential for members wishing to resume face to face work and we want to best support you in your efforts to do so, while still being aware of the risks that remain while the COVID-19 virus is still in active circulation with significant risk of transmission and a second wave.

Recognising that COSRT can only provide broad advice, we first recommend that you keep up to date with all official guidance. That is available at: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

We would also suggest you consider the following points in any consideration of a return to face to face work:

- Do your decisions meet the requirements of COSRT's Code of Ethics and Practice, including but not limited to elements such as?
    - "Practitioners must hold the welfare of service users central to their work and commit to avoiding harm."
    - "You must take prompt action if you think that service user safety, dignity or comfort is or may be seriously compromised."
    - "If you know or suspect that you have a serious condition that you could pass on to service users, or if your judgement or performance could be affected by a condition or its therapy, you must consult a suitably qualified professional."
- Does the space you plan to work from allow for social distancing of at least 1 metre – this includes any entrances, exits, corridors and waiting areas?
- Is the area regularly sanitised and if so, is it to a suitably high standard?
- Have you conducted a risk assessment of your premises and created a procedure checklist to mitigate the risk of contamination before, between and after seeing clients?
- If you work within in a shared practice space, ensure that they are also applying appropriate clinical measures and there is no risk that any of these will be compromised.

- If you work from a rented room have you checked with your landlord insurance, risk assessment, sanitisation process that you need to follow?
- Will your personal indemnity policy cover you for face-to-face work?
- Is your supervisor in support of your decision?
- The amendments you may need to make to your service user contract.
- Have you considered the use of PPE or facemasks and the impact on therapy if they are used?
- The client's need and safety and any risk factors such as known, or undisclosed, underlying illness and travel risk.
- Your personal needs and safety and any risk factors such as underlying illness and travel risk.
- The needs of clients who cannot work online.
- Any other preferred options that may be available.

It is ultimately an individual's choice about how they respond to any changes in official guidance and protocols. However, we hope that these considerations might help you make those choices as and when you do. The most important advice is to stay safe, alert, protect yourself and your clients. For most this will mean continuing online therapy.

NOTE

If you are based in Northern Ireland, Wales or Scotland be aware that the regions are lifting the restrictions and a different rate and as such remote working is still the preferred medium

Insurance cover

We are aware that some insurance companies do not cover policy holders for claims arising from COVID-19. This means that if you were to be infected by the COVID-19 virus and your client became ill and believed they contracted it from you – any claim that may arise from this would not be covered.