



BPC Covid-19

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I safely and ethically work remotely?

In order to assist registrants in making changes to their work practices the BPC has issued the following general guidelines that may be helpful when working remotely:

- If not already done so, registrants should make a plan about moving to remote therapy which is communicated to each patient. For registrants working in institutions, those guidelines and requirements will have to be followed first.
- Registrants should make themselves aware of the differences between providing online/telephone and face to face psychotherapy. They should consider the impact this may have on the relationship between the therapist and patient and whether this move is appropriate for the patient.
- Registrants should take appropriate software/hardware measures to ensure the safety and confidentiality of online therapy and they may want to check which software is most secure. There are many providers available

and many people use Zoom although we cannot recommend a specific provider.

- Registrants should discuss in advance with the patient what measures they are putting in place to protect their confidentiality whether the therapy is online or on the telephone and explore how the patient can ensure they have a safe and confidential physical space to participate in the session remotely.
- Registrants should continue to be aware of the obligations in relation to privacy and confidentiality as set out in the GDPR guidelines and the BPC GDPR briefing that [can be found here](#).
- If in doubt, registrants should check with their insurance company in order to ensure that they are able to provide online/telephone therapy and have the relevant insurance cover.

When can I resume face to face to sessions?

Since March 2020 Government has required by law for people to reduce social contact to limit the spread of Covid-19. The BPC advises registrants to keep up to date with the latest advice from the Government. Government guidance is subject to constant reviews and updates and these can be found on the [official Government website here](#).

Wherever possible working remotely should continue until Government guidance, registrants' clinical judgement and their personal circumstances allow for face to face work to resume. Registrants are also advised to check with their insurance companies if any specific conditions need to be met before resuming face to face sessions.

To deliver safe care, informed by relevant guidance and the values and principles set out in our professional standards, registrants must always ensure that they act

in a way that they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of their patients whilst not risking their own health by delivering face to face therapy.

What about vulnerable clients and patients?

There may be instances where stopping or moving therapeutic interventions to remote delivery is not in the best interest of the patient. 'Services relating to mental health' may be an exception when it comes to government's advice about social distancing - see [UK Government advice](#) for businesses and the self-employed.

The BPC advises that in all circumstances psychotherapists and counsellors must apply their professional judgement, seek professional/supervisory advice, refer to their insurers and, if applicable, to their employers. If they are unable to provide care to a vulnerable patient who needs face to face intervention, they must refer to alternative practitioners/institutions.

How will Contact Tracing work?

The NHS COVID-19 App will be part of a wider approach that includes manual and web-based contact tracing to identify and slow down the spread of Covid-19. An explanation of how contact tracing is expected to work can be found on the [BBC website](#). Registrants should be aware that when it is safe to resume face to face sessions if tested positive to Coronavirus, clinicians may need to inform the NHS of people they have been in contact with, this includes their patients.

Can I receive any support to adapt my practice to Covid-19?

The Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund (CMHRF) is available for mental health charities that wish to expand their support services, however due to the successful take up it has currently been paused. Grants of £20,000 or £50,000 are available for projects lasting up to 12 months. Mind is administering the fund in

partnership with the Mental Health Consortia (MHC). To find out more about the Fund [please click here](#).

In May the Government announced the launch of the [Local Authority Discretionary Grant](#) in response to COVID-19. The £617 million funding is available for distribution by Local Authorities and it is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs. Local Authorities are being asked to prioritise businesses in shared spaces, regular market traders, and **small charity properties** that would meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief.

The BPC have supported IPSE's (Association of Independent Professionals and the Self Employed) campaign calling for government to provide support to the self-employed. Recognising these challenges, the Chancellor announced specific financial measures for the self-employed, [they can be accessed here](#), under the heading 'Government Support for the Self-Employed'.

What about CPD?

The BPC encourages Registrants to continue with their CPD whenever possible and to take advantage of online courses, events and information and resources available, such as:

- How to manage the change of the therapeutic frame, such as the one offered by the [Tavistock Relationships](#).
- The Open University in collaboration with BACP has created an [module on how to deliver on-line counselling](#)
- The American Psychoanalytic Association has made available significant and useful [information for providers](#) working during the pandemic as well as a [free presentation](#) on how to move from face to face to tele-treatment

There are many more resources available that can be accessed online.

Can I continue to see my training patients?

The BPC acknowledges that training and all clinical work needs to have the flexibility to adapt to the changes required to contain the spread of the

coronavirus. Since the onset of 'lockdown', training institutions are delivering training remotely and the individual training organisations will decide if, when and how to resume face to face teaching.

It was agreed that trainees own training therapy, and their existing training cases, can continue remotely and this will be accepted by BPC as part of their training requirement. As in every situation, if the trainers consider that the trainee has reached the required standard, they have the authority to qualify them even if they have not completed all the course requirements.

It is also possible for trainees to begin their training cases remotely. Trainers, having taken into account the trainee's individual situation, the assessment of the potential training case and the specific setting issues which may pertain to the particular situation, have the discretion to allow trainees to take new training cases.

External Links:

- BACP [FAQS on Coronavirus](#)
- BACP [Guidance to Working Online](#)
- UKCP [Guidance on Coronavirus](#)
- ACTO [advice on Covid-19](#)
- [Data protection and coronavirus](#)