

The Brightwell

Physiotherapy Operating Procedures During Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Contents

Introduction.....	- 2 -
1. Physiotherapy Team Structure (in line with CSP key factors)	- 2 -
2. First Aid and Emergency Response	- 2 -
3. PPE for clinical staff and Centre members.....	- 3 -
4. Virtual first approach and informed consent	- 3 -
5. Physiotherapy Gym.....	- 3 -
6. Assessment Session	- 4 -
7. Treatment Session	- 4 -
8. Exercise Class.....	- 5 -
9. Joint Session.....	- 5 -
10. Equipment Loan	- 6 -
11. Personal Care	- 6 -
12. Car Transfers.....	- 6 -
13. Wheelchair Transfers.....	- 7 -
14. Exercise with Oxygen Therapy in the Oxygen Suite.....	- 7 -
15. Treatment Room One.....	- 7 -
16. Physiotherapy Office	- 7 -
17. Store-Room	- 7 -
18. Cleaning of fabric equipment	- 7 -
19. Staff Uniform	- 8 -
References	- 9 -

Introduction

These Physiotherapy Operating Procedures (POP) are supplemental to the latest version of The Brightwell Centre Operating Procedures (COP). Please make sure that you read these and are fully conversant with the content. If you have any questions or concerns it is your responsibility to highlight these to the Centre Manager. You can do this by emailing doro.pasantes@thebrightwell.org.uk

1. Physiotherapy Team Structure (in line with [CSP key factors](#)¹)

The number of physiotherapy team staff working at any time will be reviewed depending on demand.

These POP are based on the [PPE advice by Public Health England\(PHE\)](#) (Reference note 1)², and [guidance from the Chartered Society for Physiotherapists](#)³.

Covid suspected cases: Any member of staff or Centre members suspected of having the virus or a Centre member or staff member with a family member at home with COVID-19 symptoms must not attend any therapies until the self-quarantine or family member quarantine period is completed.

No more than four therapists will be permitted to work in the gym at the same time as limited by the number of gym zones to comply as far as possible with social distancing.

One of the (part time) physiotherapy staff will be available to assist with transfers, equipment checks, disinfecting the equipment, and other non-clinical and administrative work.

2. First Aid and Emergency Response

There will be a first-aid respondent available at The Brightwell Centre at all times.

The entrance doors to the physiotherapy department will be wedged “open” to avoid manual contact and improve the circulation of air.

If a fire breaks out in the centre, the physiotherapy staff will close the doors and follow the relevant fire procedure.

The member of staff providing the first aid or emergency support must follow [PPE as advised by PHE](#) for Face to Face physiotherapy treatment sessions.

If the incident has taken place outside the building such as in the car park or garden, in addition to following the above advice:

COVID -19 symptoms screening questionnaire should be used if you have any concerns. The screening questions will have been asked by the reception staff before allowing someone into the building.

Only staff members on duty should be present to help the person who requires assistance to avoid unnecessary contact with other members/staff attending.

3. PPE for clinical staff and Centre members

If [distancing measures](#) suggested by PHE are not possible, [PPE as advised by PHE](#) will be used to mitigate the risks of COVID-19⁴

This includes single use disposable gloves, single use disposable plastic apron, single or sessional use fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask, single or sessional use eye/face protection (if there is risk of contact with bodily fluids)

Correct sequence of [donning and doffing](#)⁵ should be followed for PPE.

The used PPE must be treated as hazardous waste and must be disposed of in the hazardous waste bin provided in the gym.

Centre member and their attendants will need to wear a surgical mask throughout the treatment session, which they must bring with them.

Centre members with respiratory issues may be exempted from this requirement, but will be asked to wear a face shield which the Centre will provide for the session.

Centre member's use of a surgical mask during the session will be added to the clinical risk assessment clinical notes.

[Distancing measures](#): Where possible, the therapist will maintain a distance of two metres from all other staff members, Centre members attending other therapies or other therapists.

4. Virtual first approach and informed consent

All the physio staff have been trained for virtual assessments and the virtual assessment training is available at [Video consultations: how to set them up well, fast?](#)

All new members and returning members will be screened and identified for Face to Face physiotherapy sessions based on the clinical decision by their physiotherapist. This initial contact and triage assessment will be conducted via remote means using a suitable method (Zoom/FaceTime/telephone).

The member will be provided with a copy of our Face to Face Physiotherapy Consent form as part of the initial screening.

Before attending the centre all new and returning members for Face to Face physiotherapy appointments will need to read, consider and sign/date our Face to Face Physiotherapy Consent form. This form must be returned to the centre either by email (preferred), other electronic means, or post, at least 24 hours prior to any Face to Face appointment.

5. Physiotherapy Gym

Four treatment zones have been marked out in the gym, and are physically separated by mobile screens

Each zone will have separate cleaning equipment, pillow paper covers, cleaning wipes and cleaning sprays. This will reduce cross infection during the cleaning process, and the therapist will not have to wait the sanitizing equipment to use.

The Centre member and their carer will wash or sanitize their hands prior to the start of the session.

The Centre member will be offered a sanitising gel for hands and wrists where hand washing is difficult for the Centre member prior to the start of the session and at the end of the session.

Only the therapist/s seeing the Centre member will be allowed to stay with the Centre member. Any other member of staff will need to follow [distancing measures](#) from the Centre member and their carer/s.

Any switching of the therapist during a treatment session will be treated as a new session. The Centre member will need to sanitise their hands if contact during the treatment session is required.

The therapist will need to be ready with their PPE on before inviting the Centre member into the treatment zone.

Any equipment to be used during the session will be cleaned according to the [infection control guidelines](#)⁶ and replaced to the storage appropriately.

6. Assessment Session

All new members will be invited for a virtual general assessment (VGA) which involves a subjective interview to understand their symptoms. Thereafter, new members may be invited for a Face to Face objective examination, also called Risk Assessment (RA) to record the baseline measures. During an RA session two-metre social distancing will be maintained as per [distancing measures](#) published by PHE

The members will be invited for risk assessment (RA) and reception will ask you COVID-19 screened questions over the phone whilst you remain in your vehicle in the car park. Do not enter the building until this telephone screening has been completed and you are subsequently invited into the building by reception. See also the Centre Operating Procedures (COP) in this respect.

If a member has a carer with them, this person will be allowed to be with the member during the RA .

Full [PPE as advised by PHE](#) will be used by the therapist and attending members and their carers will need to use a surgical mask ALL THE TIME before leaving their vehicle until they return to their vehicle.

Paperwork will be handled while strictly following all the [infection control guidelines](#). See the section 'Physiotherapy office' on handling paperwork.

7. Treatment Session

Individual treatment zones will be used for assessments and treatment appointments.

Full [PPE as advised by PHE](#) will be used by the therapist and attending members and their carers will need to use a surgical mask ALL THE TIME before leaving their vehicle until they return to their vehicle.

Seven appointments will be allocated to each therapist in a day. A maximum of two attendants will be allowed with a Centre member during the therapy session.

The number of people in one treatment zone at any time will not exceed three (if there is a carer present).
Carers will be allowed to stay only when their assistance is required during the treatment session. Otherwise, they will be requested to wait in their vehicles. Any member who may require personal assistance will need to have a carer with them. The carer will need to be available throughout the session and must therefore not leave the site and wait in their vehicle.
Clinical sessions will be 30 minutes long, with an additional 15 minutes for clinical notes writing, and clearing of the treatment zone. The treatment zone will be cleared and cleaned before writing the clinical notes so that the zones are ready for use.
8. Exercise Class
A maximum of six members will be seen during a group session.
Only one group session will be allowed in the group session area at a time.
Full PPE as advised by PHE will be used by the therapist.
Attendees will need to wear surgical masks ALL THE TIME before leaving their vehicle and until they return to their vehicle as the therapist may need to briefly break the two-metre social distancing rule.
If attendees cannot wear a surgical mask for any reason, they must wear a wipeable full-face visor which will be provided by the Centre for the member's use, unless they provide their own .
Equipment will not be shared by Centre members in the same class and will be sanitised after every use.
Distancing will be maintained as per distancing measures published by PHE. Members will maintain a two-metre distance from each other throughout the group sessions. Two-metre markers will be placed in the area that will be used for the class to help follow the social distancing rule.
Independent equipment use will only be allowed if the treatment zone is not booked for a Face to Face or group session. The independent equipment use sessions must be pre - booked and a physiotherapy member of staff will need to follow infection control policy and procedure.
9. Joint Session
A maximum of four people will be allowed in a treatment zone where a joint session is taking place. This may include an internal or external therapist or a student physiotherapist.
Distancing will be maintained as per distancing measures published by PHE.

Those involved in joint sessions will require the Full PPE as advised by PHE and will follow all the infection control guidelines .
10. Equipment Loan
Equipment trial sessions will be conducted as a treatment session and will need to be pre-booked.
The equipment will be prepared (sanitised and checked) before commencing the equipment trial according to the infection control guidelines
Distancing will be maintained as per distancing measures published by PHE. Social distancing of two-metre should be maintained where possible and Full PPE as advised by PHE must be worn if helping with getting the equipment in the Centre member's car.
The equipment will be sanitised immediately on return to the Centre. A member of staff (physiotherapy assistant) will be allocated the job of collection of the equipment from the car park.
Equipment will be kept separately, in a marked area for 72-hour periods ⁷ and thereafter any 'equipment safety' checks will be conducted.
The returned equipment cannot be loaned to another Centre member before a 72-hour period has elapsed and the deep clean and checks by the physiotherapy assistant have taken place.
11. Personal Care
If a Centre member has a continence accident, this will be discussed with the physiotherapy lead / Centre manager to decide if the member will need a personal assistant with them for any future sessions.
The physio staff will immediately clean and sanitise all the equipment and surfaces affected by the occurrence.
If a Centre member requires assistance due to an accident and they don't have a personal assistant with them (as this may have never happened with Centre member before) Full PPE as advised by PHE must be used by the member of staff assisting the Centre member and the infection control guidelines must be followed.
12. Car Transfers
This will be offered only in case of emergency such as a major and unexpected change in mobility or energy levels after the assessment or treatment sessions.
The client may request a wheelchair or walking aid after the telephone conducted COVID-19 questionnaires / screening by reception. The reception will inform the assigned therapist if the client has requested assistance with transfers/walking aid.

13. Wheelchair Transfers
Indoor wheelchair transfers will be made only with prior appointment.
Distancing will be maintained as per distancing measures published by PHE. Social distancing of two-metre should be maintained whenever possible and Full PPE as advised by PHE must be worn during the transfers.
14. Exercise with Oxygen Therapy in the Oxygen Suite
By prior appointment only
The PPE and infection control procedure must be followed as for all treatment sessions.
15. Treatment Room One
If the room is being used by a member of staff, distancing will be maintained as per distancing measures published by PHE. Social distancing of two-metre should be maintained where possible and Full PPE as advised by PHE must be worn for assessment/therapy sessions.
If the room is used by an external therapist, all the equipment must be cleaned as per the infection control guidelines before use.
All external therapists will be required to adopt all relevant Centre operational policies . ⁸
16. Physiotherapy Office
The Physiotherapy office will be cleared of all clutter and all equipment and will be sanitised at the start of each day and as often as required thereafter. A maximum of three people will be allowed in the physiotherapy office at any one time. Members will not be allowed in the physiotherapy office at any time; all appointments will be booked over the phone by the therapist or the reception.
When three members of staff are present in the physiotherapy office, a distancing measures of two metres between their work stations will be maintained, and Face to face conversation should be avoided.
All stationery and clinical notes should be only touched after disinfecting hands preferably by washing hands but otherwise using hand sanitiser gel.
17. Store-Room
Daily sanitising of contact areas such as drawer handles must be undertaken.
All the small equipment will be sanitized as per the infection control guidelines after every use.
18. Cleaning of fabric equipment
Slings / manual handling belts and any fabric equipment will be sanitised as per the infection control guidelines . The equipment can be sprayed after each use with the anti-viral spray provided by the Centre.

Pillowcases must be changed after every use and stored appropriately before they are put for washing as per the [infection control guidelines](#)..

19. Staff Uniform

A clean uniform must be worn every day. A minimum of two sets of uniform will be needed one for changing into as the other is washed and tumble dried at the Centre. Washing and drying of the uniform will be shared by the physio staff. Bare below the elbow rule should be followed all the time.

A changing area will be made available for staff.

References

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- ¹ <https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus/clinical-guidance/remote-or-face-face-consultations/face-to-face-or-not>
 - ² Recommended PPE for primary, outpatient, community and social care by setting, NHS and independent sector; Public Health England Gateway number: 2019302. V1. 08-04-2020
 - ³ <https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus/clinical-guidance/ppe-faqs> accessed on 30062020
 - ⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july#clinically-vulnerable-people> accessed on 30062020
 - ⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877658/Quick_guide_to_donning_doffing_standard_PPE_health_and_social_care_poster_.pdf accessed on 30062020
 - ⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893320/COVID-19_Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_complete.pdf accessed on 30062020
 - ⁷ <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces> accessed on 30062020
 - ⁸ PP01 Infection Control Policy 005 – 230118 , thebrightwell, policies and procedures [M:\Health & Safety\Policy & Procedures\P&P\PDF \(Current 2019\)](#)