



Face Coverings for Patients

The Government's decision to make face coverings mandatory for customers visiting 'shops' and 'supermarkets' in England from the 24th of July 2020 may raise the question does this apply to my practice?

Currently face coverings are mandatory on public transport and in NHS settings. As of the 24th July this will apply in shops and supermarkets.

In Scotland, face coverings are mandatory in any retail or health premises (NHS or private – dentists require it on entering the premises for example), and where social distancing cannot be maintained indoors. Social distancing in Scotland is still 2m. The exceptions include where screens are used at front desk for example and patients would not have to use them if they are the only person in reception.

Face coverings are currently not mandated in Wales and Northern Ireland in the retail sector. Face coverings will be mandatory on public transport in Wales from the 27th of July as is the case currently in the rest of the U.K.

The advice states that they should be used in situations where the public are indoors in an enclosed space where social distancing cannot be maintained and you will be interacting with people that you do not normally meet, which can be the case in a chiropractic practice.

In light of this advice whilst a chiropractic practice outside of an NHS setting does not fall into these categories, we still advise that you reconsider your risk assessment in deciding whether it is appropriate to request your patients to wear a face covering when they enter your practice.

If you can maintain social distancing between your patients and between them and your team, for example you have few people in the practice at any one time or have a 'one in one out' policy, then there is little benefit in requiring the wearing of face coverings.

If you are applying 1 metre plus social distancing which requires further measures or that social distancing cannot be maintained between patients and between them and your team, then it is advisable to recommend that masks/ face coverings should be advised in England.

We realise that there is not a one size fits all approach and you must consider what is appropriate for your practice. It is important to make a considered decision and be able to explain it to your patients as you may find that you are questioned on your decision either way.

We appreciate that the use of PPE has markedly changed how we practise and this brings frustration and expense along with it. We hope this will not be long term, however at this stage this is what we are required to do by Public Health England to practice safely.

We will endeavour to keep you updated as guidance may change as time goes on and as ever, we are here to assist.