

Reopening salons and spas following lockdown: reducing risks of COVID-19 and other considerations



Introduction

This document has been put together to provide guidance on matters for consideration prior to reopening your salon or spa. Please note that this is not exhaustive and that advice may change as and when there is more information from the Government. The guidance is aimed at fixed premises, including: beauty salons, hairdressers, spas and those offering treatments in educational settings.

On 23 June 2020, the Government announced that hair salons and barbers would be able to reopen from 4 July 2020 in England, while spas, massage, tattoo and piercing parlours will need to remain closed until further notice. Nail bars have also been asked to remain closed, but will be reopened when they can do so in a secure way. Where hair salons provide multiple services, only permitted treatments may be offered. See the [Government's guidance on close contact services](#) for more information on this. In Northern Ireland, an indicative date of 29 June has been set for the reopening of hair salons, barbers, nail, beauty, tanning services, electrolysis and acupuncture treatments, while in Wales, a decision on the reopening of these types of businesses is expected in July.

Scope

This guidance will only cover health and safety measures relating to reopening premises and measures to consider in order to mitigate against the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19). For matters relating to employment, please contact your HR advisor. Check your insurance policy with your insurers to check that you have sufficient cover for any changes that you may need to implement in order to comply with COVID-19 measures; also check your employers and public liability insurance. Finally, check the Government's official guidance [Working Safely during COVID-19 when providing close contact services, including hair and beauty](#).

As we learn more about COVID-19, and government guidance continues to be updated, it is the responsibility of each business owner to maintain current knowledge of any changes to the guidance.

Strategic review of your salon and spa

Now is the time to carry out a full strategic review of your salon or spa operation. The first stage of reopening should include a risk assessment to assess the possible risks posed to employees and clients. A good understanding of the routes of transmission of COVID-19 is essential as well as careful consideration of each treatment and activity to decide whether this presents a risk and how this could be mitigated or reduced. Public Health England (PHE) has published [guidance on COVID-19 and current understanding of how it is transmitted](#) on COVID-19 and current understanding of how it is transmitted between one person to another.

Think about whether you need to carry out any reasonable adjustments to ensure compliance with government guidelines on social distancing can be followed wherever possible. Most beauty salons and spas already use personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect practitioners, including masks, gloves, disposable aprons, and disposable towels. Consider whether you will have sufficient PPE when operating, including the PPE that practitioners would have worn for treatments before COVID-19 to protect against infectious diseases and other hazards, and any additional PPE that may be required to protect against COVID-19 where social distancing is not possible.

Take this time to review your policies and procedures, e.g. risk assessments, cleaning chemicals currently used and whether or not they are effective against COVID-19 (see section below on Cleaning and cleaning products), opening and closing checklists, current training protocols, clients and employees' questionnaires. If you are unsure about any of these, seek advice and support from your professional membership body.

Undertake a risk assessment of each treatment that you currently offer, taking into consideration the duration of the treatment and whether the proximity of the treatment puts the client or therapist at increased risk. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a [useful guide on how to undertake a risk assessment on how to undertake a risk assessment](#) for COVID-19. Consider any adjustments you will have to make (as far as is reasonably practicable) and take into account other circumstances, such as not being able to obtain PPE or products that you would normally use.

Alternative treatments should be considered if the adjustments are impractical, cost significantly more time and resource or will compromise employee and client safety. It may be worth considering offering a limited service initially or offering certain treatments on different days. Cleaning the same set of equipment will be less time consuming and might be an easier process to follow to ensure client and practitioner safety. This will help you with infection control and will only require the staff that can carry out that type of treatment to be present on a given day.

Changes to consider, subject to a risk assessment:

- The amount of time that will be required to thoroughly clean and disinfect work areas, between each client e.g. massage couch, equipment and hand contact services
- Opening times – you may only want to operate at reduced hours initially
- Number of staff that you will require and the hours that they will be working
- Discuss your thoughts and new procedures with your team; engaging with your team at the earliest possible opportunity is important to ensure that they fully understand the new requirements and the implications if not followed
- Retrain staff on infection control procedures prior to re-opening and any other procedures that may have changed

Preparing your salon or spa for opening

- Thoroughly clean your premises prior to reopening
- Develop a new cleaning protocol to be followed after reopening, using a product that is effective against COVID-19 (see section below on *Disinfection and sterilisation of tools and equipment* for more information). Pay attention to all hand contact points. Wipe over light switches with a damp cloth sprayed with disinfectant
- Display your cleaning protocol with the cleaning chemicals that are to be used somewhere that staff can easily refer to. Use disposable cleaning materials. Never mix cleaning chemicals and manufacturer's guidance must always be followed
- Check any air conditioning or ventilation systems. These should be serviced and cleaned in accordance with manufacturer's guidance
- Ensure your salon is as well ventilated. A single air change is estimated to remove 63% of airborne contaminants, after five air changes less than 1% of airborne contamination is thought to remain. Keep windows open where possible and, if there is a ventilation system, check the number of air changes from the manufacturer's guidance
- Remove any equipment, products or furniture that you will not require in the short term. This could help to de-clutter the space to ensure more effective cleaning and disinfection procedures can take place, as well as potentially freeing up space for social distancing. If you are short on storage space then move equipment or products to an area that will not cause an obstruction or clients need not come into contact with. Cover any furniture or equipment that will not be used in the short term
- Remove all soft furnishings and other miscellaneous items that are not required

- Signage should be displayed explaining that clients are required to wash their hands or use a suitable hand sanitiser on entry to the salon/spa and especially before treatments. This could form part of your overall safety statement. This should be displayed at the entrance of the salon rather than inside the premises
- The hand washing procedure can be incorporated as part of the treatment by incorporating products that are effective against bacteria and viruses
- The notice should also advise clients that they should not go ahead with any treatments if they are experiencing any symptoms relating to COVID-19 or any other infectious disease. This notice can be designed in such a way as to be welcoming and informative rather than stark and uninviting
- Ensure that there are sufficient sanitisers, disposable paper towels and a lidded and lined bin provided for clients and staff

Contact tracing

Salons and spas should keep a record of all clients seen, including questionnaires, the date and time, the therapist who gave the treatment and the treatment room used, to assist with any contact tracing that may be required.

Checking your water system on reopening

The water system must be considered as water in tanks and pipework would have been 'standing' for a period of time. Warm weather conditions may have created the right environment for Legionella bacteria to grow (Legionella bacteria thrive at temperatures between 20°C and 50°C).

- Run all taps for approximately five minutes. Place shower heads in a container of water, to prevent aerosol spray being inhaled and run through. If needed, descale and disinfect the shower heads. Follow manufacturer's guidance on cleaning chemicals that are used
- Raise the temperature of hot water tanks to at least 60°C or above to ensure any legionella bacteria are killed. Disinfect all tap areas and sinks
- More information on how to restart hot and cold water systems safely can be found in CIEH guidance, Legionnaires' disease: lockdown risks and reopening safely
- If swimming, hydrotherapy or jacuzzi pools were not drained prior to closing down, then you may wish to seek advice from a competent water treatment consultant

Further information can be found in HSE's [guidance on the control of legionella and other infectious agents in spa-pool systems](#).

Setting up separate waiting and treatment areas

- If you have larger premises, where waiting and treatment areas can be separated, consider setting up separate areas for clients waiting for and receiving a treatment
- If your premises are too small, consider how you can stagger appointment times to ensure that clients do not come into contact, for example by leaving gaps between appointments and advising clients in advance that there is no waiting area
- Set up a 'clean' reception area, demarcated by a line to limit the distance at which clients may advance to
- Reception staff should limit the number of clients who can be in the reception area at any one time

Further information can be found in the Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners' (JCCP) guidance, on page 8, [Preparing your place of work: COVID-19 and return to practice](#).

Advice to clients

- If you have a website, ensure that your new procedures for controlling infection and booking is available and easy to understand. If you do not have a website, consider displaying the information at the entrance of your premises. Alternatively, when the client telephones for an appointment, make sure the person taking the call explains the new procedures
- Create a questionnaire for your clients to pre-screen for wellbeing circumstances and symptoms. Include questions about whether the client or anyone in client's household has exhibited symptoms or has tested positive, if anyone in the client's household is

going to work and the risks involved and if anyone in the household is vulnerable or being shielded

- Email the questionnaire to the client to complete prior to the appointment and stress the need for the questionnaire to be completed and returned via email before the treatment so that there is sufficient time to review the answers and raise any queries. Alternatively, this can be completed over the phone before the treatment. It is recommended that clients are telephoned on the day of the treatment to check that they are still well
- It is recommended that clients are telephoned on the day of the treatment to check that they are still well. If you or a member of staff suspects that a client is not well, then discuss this with the client and offer a future appointment. Explain that this is to protect your staff as well as other clients
- Encourage clients to pay for treatments before they arrive and to bring as few personal items with them as possible. They should attend on their own unless they need someone with them for a medical reason, e.g. someone who assists them to move around
- Make it clear to clients that they should arrive at their allotted time to avoid overlap with other clients and minimise time spent in the salon as much as possible. Extra time should be made for appointments to cover hand washing and additional cleaning

Personal hygiene and the health and wellbeing of therapists

- Therapists should have enough uniforms to ensure that these can be changed daily
- Therapists are advised to change into their uniforms when they arrive at the premises and remove them before they leave at the end of their shift. Every day after removal, uniforms must be washed at

temperatures above 60°C or higher. Uniforms should not be worn to and from work, if public or shared transport is used

- Update instructions and information on new hygiene measures
- Reiterate good hand washing technique. If gloves are worn, they must be changed after each client as a minimum. Gloves should also be discarded if they may have been contaminated e.g. after touching your face. It is recommended to use powder free nitrile gloves in case the therapist is sensitive or allergic to latex
- Remind therapists not to come into work if they are exhibiting symptoms or if they have come into contact with anyone with symptoms
- Reassure your team that their health and wellbeing is paramount and that there is support available if required. HSE has produced guidance for [Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus](#), which is useful for raising staff awareness and can be used for training
- HSE has issued [new rules for employers under RIDDOR](#) for the reporting of COVID-19 cases when associated with work

Personal protective equipment

Practitioners performing beauty treatments should already be trained in the use of PPE to protect them against infections, other than COVID-19, and from other risks. An assessment will need to be made as to what additional PPE may be needed, if any, as a result of the risks of COVID-19.

Most treatments will likely involve close contact between therapists and clients in an enclosed space, so it is important that the correct PPE is used. Consider each treatment you offer and carry out a risk assessment

to help decide what PPE is appropriate. If PPE is used, employees must be trained to use it properly, and know how to detect and report any faults, and it must be properly looked after and stored when not in use.

The Government guidance recommends that all practitioners should use a clear visor which covers the face when working with clients in close proximity. However, any services that require workers to be within very close proximity to the client (defined as the area in front of the face where splashes and droplets from the nose and mouth, that may not be visible, can be present and pose a hazard from the client to the practitioner and vice versa), should not be resumed unless they can be adapted in line with this guidance to make them safe. For example, by moving out of the highest risk zone and wearing a visor.

PPE should be worn in accordance with HSE guidelines. HSE has produced a useful toolkit, [Risk at work – Personal Protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).

Further useful information on the types of PPE that may be required for carrying out cosmetic treatments can be found in JCCP guidance, on pages 9-12, [Preparing your place of work: COVID-19 and return to practice](#).

Disinfection and sterilisation of tools and equipment

The most effective way to sterilise your equipment is to use an autoclave, which must conform to BS EN 13060. Further information on types of autoclaves can be found in CIEH guidance: [Tattooing and body piercing guidance toolkit](#).

- Alcohol-based solutions must be at least 60%
- Check with the manufacturer or supplier of your products to clarify whether the products you are using are effective against COVID-19 and ensure that you follow manufactures guidelines for contact times

- Use single use equipment where possible and minimise risks of cross contamination
- Ensure your COSHH assessments are reviewed and up to date
- Disposable cleaning materials should be used and disposed of safely. Check with your waste collector if there are any special procedures required

Further information can be found in guidance produced by British Association of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology (BABTAC), [Back to work guidelines: Guidance for preparing beauty and hair salons post-lockdown](#).

Cleaning and cleaning products

PHE has produced guidance on cleaning to minimise the spread of COVID-19, [COVID 19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#).

The Society of Food Hygiene and Technology (SOFHT) has produced useful guidance on cleaning products that are effective against COVID-19, [Cleaning And Disinfection Regime With Regard to novel Coronavirus](#).

Further resources

Sector specific guidance

UK Government guidance: [Working Safely during COVID-19 when providing close contact services, including hair and beauty](#)

BABTAC: [Back to work guidelines: Guidance for preparing beauty and hair salons post-lockdown](#)

CIEH: [Tattooing and body piercing guidance toolkit](#)

JCCP: [Preparing your place of work: COVID-19 and return to practice](#)

HSE advice

[RIDDOR reporting of COVID-19](#)

[Risk at work – Personal Protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

[Working safely during COVID-19 – risk assessment](#)

[Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak – a short guide](#)

Legionella control advice

CIEH: [Legionnaires' disease: lockdown risks and reopening safely](#)

HSE: [The control of legionella and other infectious agents in spa-pool systems](#)

Cleaning advice

PHE: [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#)

SOFHT: [Cleaning And Disinfection Regime With Regard to novel Coronavirus](#)

Public health advice

NHS: [Latest information and advice about coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

PHE: [Guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection / home isolation \('stay at home'\)](#)

PHE: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resource Centre](#)

PHE: [Social distancing and for vulnerable people](#)

PHE: [Transmission characteristics and principles of infection prevention and control](#)

Credits

This guidance was written by Sandra Moore, Technical Director at Hygenisys Environmental Health Consultancy, and member of CIEH's Cosmetic Treatments Advisory Panel.

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