

### Relaxation of Coronavirus Lockdown

We have been in 'lockdown' now for a significant time and many of our canine clients now need the support of Canine Bowen Technique. For CBTA animal welfare is a priority and while we have previously requested practitioners cease working, we are aware that many regular patients are deteriorating without on-going treatment or and new canine cases are unable to explore the potential of Canine Bowen Technique Support, alongside their primary care.

As the CV19 situation continues to evolve ours and our clients balance of priorities continues to change. The professional judgement of the practitioner should always lead the decision as to whether it is safe to attend and offer CBT to a dog. As well as the urgency of the case we need to be aware of the safety of the practitioner, the owner and the canine client. We also must be aware of the setting in which the session occurs. Although things may be easing, we cannot consider this to be a return to work as normal.

For all animal practitioners there will be many issues that we, as professionals, will need to address. In addition, the Government may reverse any easing of lockdown if CV19 case numbers rise again.

Social distancing is likely to remain a part of our lives for a very long time. It is social distancing that provides us with one of our biggest logistical challenges.

The importance of good Risk Assessment in making your decision to see a client(s) comes to the fore. You need to use your common sense, each situation will be different. Vitally the risk assessment and subsequent plan for the visit/appointment MUST be discussed and agreed between yourself (practitioner) and the client/owner of the dog.

### Changes to Government Advice - 'Lockdown'.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May the Prime Ministers TV broadcast stated that they wish to actively encourage those workers who cannot work from home to return to work, with the following conditions:

1. Preferably travel by car (also to bicycle or walk and to avoid public transport).
2. YOU MUST MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING.
3. However, this is ONLY APPLICABLE FOR THOSE WORKING IN ENGLAND AT THIS TIME.

Government has announced that we are past the peak of the virus and there are now indications that a staged return to work may be possible.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE DOCUMENTS ARE PROVIDED TO OFFER AS MUCH SUPPORT AS WE ARE ABLE TO, AS A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONER TO ALWAYS REFER TO AND MAINTAIN THE MOST UP TO DATE GOVERNMENT ADVICE AND UPDATE THEIR RISK ASSESSMENT ACCORDINGLY. FOR FURTHER REFERENCE SEE:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb967e286650c2791ec7100/working-safely-during-covid-19-other-peoples-homes-110520.pdf>

### CBTA'S PERSPECTIVE

CBTA feels that it is important CBT practitioners progression back to work is comparable and in line with other MSK modalities, registers and associations. With appropriate, mindful precautions, MSK work with animals could recommence.

However, CBT practitioners need to be especially aware when completing their risk assessments for each CBT session, that they continue to maintain the code of ethics and professional conduct that CBTA practitioners stand for and as such we have additional considerations prior to returning to work e.g.:

- WE DO NOT RESTRAIN A DOG - Remember, choice and trust are a fundamental part of what is a CBT session.
- WE MUST NEVER FORCE CBT ON A DOG - as such they must be free to walk away if they wish to do so.

## Relaxation of Coronavirus Lockdown and Professional Practice.

### **CBT relaxation working alongside Gov Stages of relaxation.**

Because **CBT practitioners work without restraining their canine clients** we request practitioners reintroduce working professionally as follows\*:

- During Gov Stages 1 &2, relaxation of lockdown - Work with existing CBT clients only if possible\*\*. Only work with new CBT clients if it is an emergency request as agreed within the dogs collaborative team (Owner, Practitioner(s) and veterinarian).
- During Gov Stage 3, relaxation of lockdown - Work with all CBT clients.

\* CBTA and its practitioners will always work within existing Government guidelines, as such the above guidance is in place, unless further Gov guidelines specific to our profession is released and states otherwise.

\*\*This is so that the dog will choose to be with you whilst you offer CBT, be calmer during the session, minimising concerns/risk with distance between owner and practitioner.

We also believe the owner should always be able to observe the session, even if this is from a distance, through a window, through a child gate. We want them to be able to see what's going on, this protects you, reassures the owner and should in most cases help the dog feel safe and settled.

CV19 continues to be present in the population and as such it is imperative you carry out Risk Assessments prior to agreeing to see each and every client and you must carry out a dynamic risk assessment whilst you are working.

### ***If you do not feel safe seeing a client, remember you are not obliged to do so.***

With appropriate preparation, precautions and risk assessments you can now return to seeing cases, with the usual veterinary referral/consent, providing you can maintain social distancing and everyone (yourself and your client) is aware of and satisfied with the level risk.

**Remember – Our philosophy  
(As well as our Code of Ethics & Professional Practice).**




- Listening to and working in partnership with the dog.
- Creating a relationship of trust to maximise the effect of treatment.
- Never forcing a treatment on a dog against its wishes.
- Using a holistic approach to treatment.
- Working collaboratively with the vets in the best interests of the dog.
- Recognising that dogs are a separate species and have their own needs and requirements.

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**ALL PRACTITIONERS MUST PERSONALLY ENSURE ANY RISK ASSESSMENT AND PRECAUTIONS THEY CHOOSE TO INCLUDE IN THEIR PRACTICE ARE ADEQUATE AND ACCEPTABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR CANINE BOWEN TECHNIQUE PROFESSIONAL INSURANCE - IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK WITH YOUR OWN INSURANCE COMPANY PRIOR TO RESTARTING YOUR PRACTICE.**

### RISK ASSESSMENTS

A pre-visit risk assessment and telephone call is essential. Gain as much information prior to the visit/clinic appointment as possible to minimise contact time.

All visits/clinic appointments should be risk assessed and the results documented. Including those where treatment is refused and the reasons why, with documented details of the explanation to the client.

It is VITAL you keep written copies of all Risk Assessments and owners are given the checklist document prior to your appointment. Attached with this document are two further documents for you to work with (please make any additions as you feel is required to personalise and support your own specific professional circumstances

1. CBTA CV19 Risk Assessment Checklist
2. CBTA Checklist for Owners - To be given to the owner prior to visit/clinic appointment.

**Practitioners MUST ALWAYS STAY UP TO DATE AND WORK WITHIN CURRENT GOV guidelines in their relevant country in relation to levels of lockdown and guidelines for professional working and as such update any risk assessment they are working with accordingly.**

### DECIDING TO SEE A CLIENT AND/OR BEGIN WORKING AGAIN

To guide you here are some points that should be taken into account:

1. WELFARE - We believe with appropriate provisions and adequate Risk Assessment, dogs with declining health & well-being, demonstrable pain and welfare issues should be seen.
2. INSURANCE - Ensure all precautions you have in place and actions you have taken to restart your professional practice are adequate for your current insurance and liability. Ensure you properly document and record all risk assessments and agree safe parameters of working with owners prior to commencing your practice.
3. LIABILITY - CBTA DOES NOT ACCEPT LIABILITY FOR PRACTITIONERS CHOOSING TO REOPEN THEIR PRACTICE. The professional judgement of the practitioner should always lead the decision as to whether it is safe to reopen their clinic and that they feel confident they can provide adequate provisions of safety to minimise risk to owner/clients. It is also a practitioners professional judgement if they feel they should attend and offer CBT to any specific dog.
4. RISK ASSESSMENTS are VITAL, see further info included within this document and attached.
5. No appointments should be made with anyone who has CV19 symptoms or who is in close contact with anyone with CV19 symptoms. You must follow Gov guidelines and there must be a 14-day quarantine period, prior to seeing them. Consider the suitability of wearing a mask to reduce the risk of the practitioner spreading CV19 between clients. Consider asking owners to wear masks to reduce the risk of transmission to the practitioner.

Most dogs will be OK with the use of masks, if they find this too challenging to be able to offer CBT, then this forms part of your dynamic risk assessment and decision making with the owner.

6. If you have symptoms do not see any clients, get tested, and await a clear result, prior to seeing any clients.
7. Animals with owners in the vulnerable categories should not be treated in the normal way. Within your risk assessment, plan, discuss and agree with the client the best ways to minimise risk and agree if it is still appropriate for you to see the dog at this time.

## Relaxation of Coronavirus Lockdown and Professional Practice.

For example, visiting a dog that you know at its home, but the owner is vulnerable.

- Practitioner may agree to see the dog in the garden and not walk through or go into the house.
- The dog will be let into the garden and the owner observe from a window in the house.
- All discussion regarding the case to be completed prior to arriving and after leaving the session.
- Appropriate levels of agreed biosecurity before arriving and on departure.

8. Contact all clients on the morning of their appointment to confirm there have been no changes in health status of owners or those they are living with since your last risk assessment.
9. CLINIC SETTING - Ideally dogs should be seen in a clinic setting rather than home visits if possible, as cleanliness, disinfection and biosecurity are easier to control. **If home visits are necessary, ensure that no other pets/family etc are present.** In a clinic setting explore the possibility of treatment without owner being immediately present, but able to watch the session e.g. can view from a distance through a window, over a stable door/see over a gate.
10. HOME VISITS - Risk assess home visits very carefully and risk assess individual setups. As a professional you will be aware of the situations, and risks, at each of your regular clients homes. Some may be relatively 'safe', others less so. The decision to attend a client should be dictated by your risk assessment and agreement between yourself and the owner of the risks and an agreed plan.

Whenever possible work outside, in secure gardens rather than entering the home.

11. BIOSECURITY - Observe biosecurity in your own clinic, at home visits as well as your car and when arriving/leaving home visits.

Hand washing is still the most important preventative measure you can take (see included with this email hand washing guidance). Clean any equipment after finishing e.g. clipboard.

Change into/out of overalls or work clothing onsite. Use different overalls or changeable 'top layers' of clothing with each client. They should only be worn during the appointment and taken off prior to getting into car/departing for home visits. Ideally these items of clothing are sprayed with sanitising clothing spray and/or bagged and washed at home (wash uniforms onsite if you work from a clinic).

Do not share paper; email all documents prior to and after the session(s). Take your own pen for use. Wipe down any chairs you have sat on/owner has sat on. Try not to handle gates/door handles etc, ask the client to open them for you if possible.

Ask the owner to bring their own dog bed/matting if attending your clinic.

Consider wearing a face mask/face covering and use disposable gloves especially in an enclosed space. This is to minimise risk of infecting anyone else if you are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic with CV19.

12. MINIMAL CONTACT OF SURFACES, DURING HOME VISITS - With home visits, ask for gates to be opened and closed for you to minimise touching surfaces. No loose dogs/cats around that could transmit virus via petting, ensure animal is ready and waiting for you (i.e. no putting on collars, leads etc and unnecessary handling of owners equipment), carry your own soap and towels to wash between visits and ask for a fresh bucket of warm water (to be outside when you arrive if you are working in the garden) or bring your own bowls/water for hand washing (see hand washing doc attached). Accept no refreshments.

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13. WORKING IN ENCLOSED SPACES - Work in an outside space whenever possible. In premises that are dedicated for seeing cases consider taking the dog from the owner at the door (**as long as the owner is still able to observe from a window/through the door**) and limit the owners entry to the building.

If working within the enclosed space that is the owners home or your own consultation room ensure the windows are opened to increase ventilation. Maintain social distancing with owner at ALL times.

14. CONTACT WITH OWNERS - SOCIAL DISTANCE IS A MUST. Keep a minimum of 2m between you and the client; ensuring you are safe when working with the dog.

Discuss with the owner and read through the background history/all details of the dog, including vet consent forms, prior to the session. As such minimising time with the Owner.

Discuss your CV19 safety requirements with the owner before the visit so they are aware of what you will be doing, if you require them to wear a mask and the need to maintain social distancing. Be very clear that if they cannot observe your requirements the appointment cannot go ahead.

15. HANDLING OF THE DOG - Always consider is this dog safe to treat with these restrictions in place?

REMEMBER YOUR OWN SAFETY WHEN WORKING WITH A DOG - As always it is vital to invite the dog to come to you, never force the CBT session on the dog, be aware if they have any areas they are uncomfortable/unhappy to be touched. Remember to ASK the dog, be polite and always listen to the dog.

16. TRANSPORT - You should travel in your own transport; it is very important you keep your car clean and disinfected. Carry hand wash, gel in a bucket, towels with you. Use disinfectant wipes to clean car door handles and the steering wheel after each visit. If you use gloves, safely bag them at the end of the session and dispose of all waste in a non-household bin.

17. WHICH CLIENTS DO I SEE? - **Please see points above re Gov Stages of relaxation.** Only see regular clients if possible, this reduces the risk to you and the clients and eases the process of risk assessment. Do not 'poach' another practitioners' clients.

Try to always see one person, this same person at every session to reduce the number of contacts you will have. If you visit a premise with multiple dogs, try to see only one person for the duration.

18. NEW CLIENTS - With new clients, create a close liaison with the vet re the risks. You may choose to share your risk assessment and procedures in place relating to CV19 and set up of the CBT session environment, not just the clinical condition. **Please see points above re Gov Stages of relaxation.**

19. PAYMENT- attempt to remove the need to handle cash payments. Request payment by BACS/credit card/paypal.

20. REMEMBER - This is NOT a return to normal working. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list of all the possible considerations and scenarios but an attempt to offer some guidance. Your professional judgement and expert opinion should be used at all stages to ensure yours and the client's safety while also minimising the risks of spreading CV19.

The professional judgement of the practitioner, based on a thorough risk assessment, should always lead the decision as to whether it is safe to attend and treat an animal.