**BEIS Webinar FAQ: Close Contact Services Face Masks and Visors**

On 28 July 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) hosted a webinar on the re-opening of close-contact services. An FAQ from the webinar, distributed by BEIS, is available here.

**Close Contact Services: face masks and visors Q&A**

**What’s changed?**

Services that involve work directly in front of the face will now be available to clients, including eyebrow threading, eyelash treatments, facial treatments and make up application.

Following advice from SAGE, businesses providing close contact services should now ensure that employees working in close proximity to their clients for an extended period of time wear both a clear visor and a Type II face mask.

As you know, we are being led by the scientific and medical advice when it comes to updating our guidance. That’s why it has been implemented now.

**What’s the definition of ‘extended time’? Is there science to support this?**

An extended period of time refers to the majority of the working day, irrespective of the number of clients served during the day.  ​

**What was the SAGE advice?**

SAGE has recommended that guidance for settings where people are in close proximity for a long duration (e.g. hairdressing), and that currently only require face shields to be worn, should be changed to include the wearing of face coverings

Why a Type II mask not a face covering?

Type II face masks are distinct from face coverings. Type II face masks are medical face masks made up of a protective 3-ply construction that prevents large particles from reaching the client or working surfaces.​ Type II face masks are not PPE, but will provide a physical barrier to minimise contamination of the mouth and nose when used correctly.

**When will this new guidance take effect?**

Immediately from publication.

Don’t you think this a shambles after barely giving them any notice of highest risk zone treatments being withdrawn?

We have always been clear that moving forward with the Roadmap depended on the prevalence of COVID-19. We need to continue to manage the risk.

**Who does this apply to?**

All close contact services workers.

Close contact services include hairdressing, barbershops, beauty and nail bars, makeup and tattoo studios, tanning salons/booths, spas and wellness businesses, sports and massage therapy, well-being and holistic locations, dress fitters, tailors and fashion designers.

**What is a Type II face mask? Is it like any other face covering?**

Type II face masks are distinct from face coverings. Type II face masks are medical face masks made up of a protective 3-ply construction that prevents large particles from reaching the client or working surfaces.​ Type II face masks are not PPE, but will provide a physical barrier to minimise contamination of the mouth and nose when used correctly.

**Are you going to supply Type II face masks to affected businesses?**

No. Type II face masks are relatively cheap. A typical price would be 49p per mask (correct to 13 Aug 2020, Amazon.co.uk).

We have also provided an unprecedented range of support packages for business during this pandemic.

As part of the government’s response to the pandemic, the Chancellor has announced a host of measures to help businesses, including loans, tax deferrals and cash grants.

There is particular support for smaller businesses and the self-employed, to help bolster the existing package of support available. For example, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme enables small businesses quicker access to finance, where they can borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 with no repayments due for a year, and no interest charged during that time either.

**Are clients required to wear these masks?**

No, not Type II face masks. Clients should wear face coverings unless it is essential for their treatment not to do so. From 8 August, it has been mandatory for members of the public to wear a face covering in:

o   nail, beauty, hair salons and barbers - other than where necessary to remove for treatments

o   massage parlours

o   tattoo and piercing parlours

Those with certain health conditions, disabled people and children under the age of 11 will be exempt from using face coverings.

**Can clients remove their face coverings?**

Where it is essential for a treatment, for example a facial or beard trimming, a client can remove their facemask for that service only.

There are also some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this, this includes exemption cards. No person needs to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about their reason for not wearing a face covering.

The Government has provided clear guidance for members of public on how to wear and manage a face covering. This is available online and via the guidance.

**But this penalises a lot of small businesses?**

We understand and appreciate the challenges faced by small businesses during this pandemic. There is particular support for smaller businesses and the self-employed, to help bolster the existing package of support available. For example, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme enables small businesses to get quicker access to finance, where they can borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 with no repayments due for a year, and no interest charged during that time either.

It's important to remember that this new guidance has been put in place to lower the risk of transmission between staff and clients, based on the latest scientific evidence.

**Have you consulted the unions/businesses on this?**

The National Hair & Beauty Federation, British Association of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology, and British Beauty Council have been consulted and support this approach, as the safety of their staff and customers is paramount.

**What do close contact services need to do?**

We have set out clear steps that should be taken to keep customers safe in our COVID-secure guidelines.

Businesses providing close contact services should ensure that employees working in close proximity to their clients for an extended period of time wear both a clear visor and a Type II face mask.

They should also ensure that clients are wearing face coverings, unless it is essential for the purposes of the treatment not to do so.

**Will they be able to open in areas currently under local lockdown?**

Employers must follow all instructions from authorities in the event of new [local restrictions](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/0A1oCQ6OzI6Ozjc9SnF5).

**Will this take away PPE from essential workers?**

Type II face masks are not PPE, and so will not affect the supply of PPE for medical workers.

**Are you telling them to wear visors and face masks?**

We are recommending that workers should wear visors and Type II face masks.

Visors should be a clear visor that covers the face and provides a barrier between the wearer and the client from respiratory droplets caused by sneezing, coughing or speaking.

Type II face masks will provide a physical barrier to minimise contamination of the mouth and nose when used correctly.

**Why didn’t you do this back in June?**

Our approach has always been guided by the scientific and medical advice. We have updated the guidance as the advice changes throughout the pandemic.

We want to ensure we can minimise risk to both customers and employees, while also ensuring that people feel confident in going to a close contact services provider.

**Does industry agree with this approach?**

The National Hair & Beauty Federation, British Association of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology, and British Beauty Council have been consulted and support this approach, as the safety of their staff and customers is paramount.

The DCMO and Public Health England have signed off this approach.

**Are these services now safe?**

We have worked closely with the sector and public health experts to ensure these services can resume in as safe a way as possible and in line with COVID-secure guidelines.

**But surely this means they weren’t safe?**

Our approach has always been guided by the scientific and medical advice, and the CSA and CMO feed into that.

**Will businesses be forced to comply?**

Businesses are already subject to legal obligations to protect their staff under existing health and safety law. This means taking appropriate steps to provide a safe working environment, which now includes providing Type II face masks for employees working in close proximity to their clients for an extended period of time.

The vast majority of businesses will want to do everything possible to protect their staff and customers.

Local authorities and HSE monitor compliance, including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

If the enforcement authority finds that a business is not properly managing the risks, they can take a range of action including issuing information and enforcement notices to prohibit or require changes to be made, and if those are not complied with, they will take tougher action like closing unsafe businesses, imposing fines [potentially unlimited] or jail sentences [up to 2 years].

**How will you ensure they are meeting the guidelines if not?**

This guidance forms part of employers’ normal health and safety practice. Local authorities and HSE monitor compliance, including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

**If a worker is exempt from wearing Type II face masks, what should their employer do?**

To protect their staff and their customers, employers should not allow workers who are exempt to work in close proximity to clients. Employers should consult with their employees to determine who, from 15 August, can come into the workplace safely taking account of a person’s journey, caring responsibilities, protected characteristics, and other individual circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

**Do you expect this to affect certain groups disproportionately? (e.g. people with disabilities)**

This guidance does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that as a business or an employer you continue to comply with your existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics.

As a client, are people who need to communicate with me able to remove their Type II face mask if I find them wearing it distressing?

If a person is in distress because a Type II face mask is being used, a person can remove their Type II face mask to communicate more clearly with their mouths visible so disabled people can lip read. This would include people with learning disabilities and autism.

**Does this mean all workplaces will soon order workers to wear Type II face masks? Isn’t this getting complicated?**

There is no universal face coverings guidance for workplaces because of the variety of work environments in different industries. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has provided [detailed guidance for specific workplace settings](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/JrjMCRPLAFrE7qC0jLWo). Employers must make sure that the risk assessment for their business addresses the risks of COVID-19 using BEIS guidance to inform decisions and control measures including close proximity working.

It is important to note that coronavirus (COVID-19) needs to be managed through a hierarchy or system of control including social distancing, high standards of hand hygiene, increased surface cleaning, fixed teams or partnering, and other measures such as using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.

These measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the workplace, but there are some other workplace circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial and a precautionary measure; this will largely be to protect others and not the wearer. If employees in workplaces where they aren’t required choose to wear a face covering, normal policies relating to occupational workwear and PPE will continue to apply.

**Why does this not apply to pubs and restaurant workers?**

This guidance has been introduced because of the increased risk faced by the employees providing close contact services, who are likely to need to work in close proximity to their clients, usually for an extended period of time.

Pubs and restaurants should already have additional measures in place to reduce risk, such as protective screens and social distancing, which close contact workers may not be able to implement due to the nature of their work.

Businesses are already subject to legal obligations to protect their staff under existing legislation.

**Facial treatments ALLOWED on 15 August Q&A**

Topline

From 15 August, services in the highest risk zone, the area in front of the face, can resume, as long as businesses follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines and subject to any local restrictions.

**Why are businesses not allowed to offer services near the face until 15 August?**

There is a much higher risk of transmission of the virus face-to-face and in very close proximity, such as facial treatments and make up services.

From 15 August, services in the highest risk zone can resume, as long as businesses follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines and subject to any local restrictions. This includes the new recommendation for Type II face masks.

**Why did it take so long to reopen the industry as a whole?**

As we have repeatedly said, we need to be confident services are able to reopen in a COVID-secure way for the staff and customers. Hairdressers were the initial phase of safely reopening close contact services, this was followed by reopening the rest of the sector, and then allowing services in the highest risk zone to resume from 15 August.

Businesses should follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines, making sure that steps are in place to mitigate the risks of transmission before they reopen.

**What do they need to do?**

We have set out clear steps that should be taken to keep customers safe in our COVID-secure guidelines.

As for some examples, people providing close contact services should wear visors and Type II face masks as additional protection, use gloves and avoid skin to skin contact where possible and unless crucial to the service, use an appointment only policy, avoid overlapping appointments, distance customer seating appropriately, clean thoroughly after each client, prepare equipment in advance to reduce movement in spaces, screen customers ahead of the appointment to check they do not have symptoms, and so on.

Additionally, clients should wear face coverings, unless it is essential for their treatment for them not to do so.

**Who does this apply to?**

All close contact services which includes: hairdressers, nail bars and salons, tanning booths and salons, spas, beauty salons, massage and tattoo studios, and body piercing services.

**Are they allowed to carry out all services?**

From 15 August, services in the highest risk zone, the area around the face, can resume, as long as businesses follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines and are not subject to any local restrictions.

We have worked closely with businesses, trade associations and medical experts to determine both what is the highest risk zone and what services would fall within this zone. Examples of these services include face waxing, facial or eyebrow treatments, make up services, and microblading.

**Can massages still take place without gloves?**

Staff should avoid skin to skin contact with customers wherever possible and where this isn’t crucial to their service, such as manicures, pedicures and tattoo services. Some services like spray tans will be able to avoid skin to skin contact completely.

**What scientific/medical evidence backs this up?**

As defined by consultation with the industry and with medical advisors, the highest risk zone is the area in front of the face. As you’ll have heard from SAGE, the highest risk of transmission is through aerosols and droplets when people are in prolonged close, face-to-face contact within 2m.

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.

Based on the additional mitigations for all services, requiring that all employees working in close proximity to their clients for an extended period of time wear both a clear visor and a Type II face mask, it has been determined that these services can now also safely resume. PHE and HSE are supportive of this position.

**The beauty industry in Northern Ireland has been allowed to provide all services including facials. Why is it different in England?**

Public health is a devolved matter. This guidance clearly explains that coverage is limited to England only.

**Does industry agree with this approach?**

We have worked closely with businesses and trade associations from the industry, as well as with medical experts, to determine both what is the highest risk zone and what services would fall within this zone.

The National Hair & Beauty Federation, British Association of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology, and British Beauty Council have been consulted and support this approach, as the safety of their staff and customers is paramount.

The DCMO and Public Health England have signed off this approach.

Is the government going to provide extra financial support for those in the industry who are still unable to return to work?

As part of the government’s response to the pandemic, the Chancellor has announced a host of measures to help businesses, including loans, tax deferrals and cash grants.

There is particular support for smaller businesses and the self-employed, to help bolster the existing package of support available. For example, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme enables small businesses quicker access to finance, where they can borrow between £2,000 and £50,000 with no repayments due for a year, and no interest charged during that time either.

Lots of apprentices rely on the beauty industry for placements. How does the government intend to help them?

We recognise that hair and beauty is a popular course for many of our young people. We expect that the reopening of hairdressers and barbers on 4 July, and the wider reopening beauty sector on 13 July, means that many apprentices will be able to continue their training and secure places with salons.

The Chancellor’s announcement on 7 July provided further support to apprentices and the businesses they train with as, from August to January, any firm that hires a new apprentice will receive up to £2000.

**Can people offer these types of services in other people’s homes?**

Yes, as long as they apply the COVID-secure guidelines for working in other people’s homes as well as the specific guidance for close contact services, and no-one in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is self-isolating.

**How will you ensure they are meeting the guidelines if not?**

This guidance forms part of employers’ normal health and safety practice. Local authorities and HSE monitor compliance, including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

Members of the public, including employees, can also access HSE’s dedicated hotline, which is staffed Monday to Friday, or make an enquiry via the online form linked to directly within the COVID-secure guidelines.

**Can you force a business to close if they do not comply? Under what powers? How quickly can this happen?**

The vast majority of businesses will want to do everything possible to protect their staff and customers.

Local authorities and HSE monitor compliance, including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

If the enforcement authority finds that a business is not properly managing the risks, they can take a range of actions including issuing improvement and enforcement notices to prohibit or require changes to be made, and if those are not complied with, they will take tougher action like closing unsafe businesses, imposing fines or jail sentences.

**Under what law are businesses required to operate a safe environment? What exactly does it say?**

Employers are legally responsible under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for the health and safety of their employees and others affected by their business with a duty to make their premises safe and prevent risks to health.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum an employer must do is:

●        identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards)

●        decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)

●        take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn’t possible, control the risk

If they employ 5 or more people, they must record their significant findings, including the hazards, who might be harmed and how, and what they are doing to control the risks.

**Why** did **you allow make-up artists to work on film sets but not in salons?**

The application of make up or hairdressing of performers in productions for the film and TV industry is undertaken by a limited number of professionals working with the limited number of performers in that production for the duration of that production.

Make-up artists and other close contact commercial services work with whoever they have appointments with and the number of people, and hence different contacts, will far exceed the number on a production set.

I am a freelance makeup artist. I will be wearing a face visor and disposable apron when resuming services on 1st Aug, however is it essential to also wear gloves to apply makeup or is washing hands/sanitising sufficient?

People providing close contact services should wear visors and type II face masks. They should avoid skin to skin contact and use gloves where possible. Further mitigation steps are outlined in the latest guidance.

We have designed some specific spa screens for use over treatment beds, a freestanding version and a clip on version which we think will benefit the industry as a whole and provide a further safety measure for both client and therapist. Would it be worth us gaining government approval for these?

While the use of screens is not a mandatory measure, the guidance states that where 2 metres social distancing is not possible employers can consider allowing their workers to work 1 metre apart with mitigations such as placing physical barriers between workstations. Other measures include encouraging workers to work side by side or back to back rather than face to face.

**Is there a list of UK approved disinfectants or cleaning agents?**

We are advising that businesses use their normal cleaning products.

**Do massage therapists NEED to wear gloves?**

People providing close contact services should wear visors and type II face masks. They should avoid skin to skin contact and use gloves where possible. Further mitigation steps are outlined in the latest guidance.

**How can there be that we have so many guidelines with visors, and so on but then at the gyms trainers and people don’t wear masks? what is the difference? if they touch and sweat?**

The use of face masks in gyms are impractical and unsafe as they can cause respiratory problems during exercise.