

BCMB return in a Covid 19 world

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BCMB

14th July 2020; updated 4th August 2020

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This plan/strategy was first written at the end of May 2020. It is a work in progress and will be updated and adapted as required over the weeks and months ahead. Latest update 14th July 2020.

1. BCMB Status

- BCMB closed its doors on 19th March 2020.
- 4 Diploma courses were in progress at the time. 3 of these have been completely on ice since then. The other has already had some online tuition including APP, initial consultation, boundaries and case history taking.
- All students have also had ongoing tutorial support via Zoom and phone contact.
- All Introductory and CPD courses were also suspended until further notice.
- In addition, the use of BCMB clinic rooms by MTI qualified practitioners was suspended.

2. Permissions/Guidance

This plan has been written with regard to the following sources of guidance:

- Government guidance issued on 9th July 2020:

“Keeping workers and clients safe during Covid 19 in close contact services”

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ef2889986650c12970e9b57/working-safely-during-covid-19-close-contact-services-090720.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2FwPuwNJ5LQ9DJ-rU3XNBrd-z2O taM0qTbeNL-fe5ErdRq1EQxcuOWPA>

This gave the green light for massage therapy to start again. It also gave the go ahead for courses in vocational training establishments. This government permission is subject to following its guidance on the appropriate use of PPE.

- Guidance from the General Council for Massage Therapy (GCMT) published on 10th July 2020:

<https://www.massagetraining.co.uk/files/gcmt-resource-pack-version-2-10-july-2020.pdf> and

<https://www.massagetraining.co.uk/files/gcmt-ppe-advice-10-july-2020.pdf>

- Guidance on emerging from lockdown for universities:

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/principles-considerations-emerging-lockdown-uk-universities-june-2020.aspx> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>

A very useful template of how this guidance has been applied in practice was provided by Earle Abrahamson, Chair of MTI. This concerned the teaching of a post graduate certificate in sonography at the University of East London which involved hands-on contact. Those principles and practices closely match those that we will use at BCMB.

- And Further Education Colleges:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers>

- Guidance to Schools from MTI issued on 13th May 2020, giving suggestions for what sections of holistic massage syllabus could be taught online.
- Email from MTI on 7th July 2020 setting out plans for theory and practical exams. BCMB will work with the dates suggested if alternatives that fit with our planned dates cannot be found.
- The BCMB Board have also been grateful to Adam Carter who runs out Remedial and Sports Massage course. As a practising osteopath, her has been able to enlighten us on the use of PPE and helped disperse reservations.

3. Documents

In addition to this overall plan, BCMB has produced a detailed **Risk Assessment** for the use of its premises in a Covid secure manner. Arising from this Risk Assessment there are different **Protocols** for the various stakeholders who enter the building:

- Teaching Staff & Students
- Practitioners & Clients
- Office Staff

The Risk Assessment and the relevant protocol(s) will be sent to the stakeholders concerned before they enter the building again. This is important given the understandable reservations and concerns expressed, for instance, by some students currently in training. These have included both the safety of practices in the building and the nature of a different approach to their training experience.

4. The “New Normal”

- Generally, Covid restrictions in terms of social distancing and PPE use are likely to be around until at least Summer 2021 and quite possibly longer – even into 2022.
- Anyone wishing to practise, receive **OR LEARN** massage in the “new normal” will need to get used to this approach.
- Clearly this is a significant departure from the usual highly engaged group experience that BCMB is renowned for. It is a shame that students will have a less “huggy” experience but that is the nature of a pandemic world!

a. PPE

- PPE will be a requirement for all hands-on work. BCMB will follow the government and GCMT guidance ie all students and practitioners will use visors and gloves when massaging.
- In addition, GCMT guidance suggests that the use of masks, gloves and aprons might offer clients additional confidence. This follows the example set by osteopaths & chiropractors. Such an approach is strongly suggested for home visits and vulnerable clients.
- **Students will be taught both the “minimum” and “maximum” approaches to PPE.**

b. Social Distancing

- Recently the 2m social distancing rule was relaxed to “1m+”. BCMB will use this 1m+ rule for students when they are not massaging. That means that they can either stand 2m apart or 1m apart, side by side. It may also be appropriate for them to wear face coverings.
- Tutors addressing a group will stand at least 2m away.
- Massage tables will be at least 1.5m apart. For small bubbles, they will be at least 2m apart.

5. Premises & Equipment

- Re hands-on massage, we can get 3 tables up in each of the Blue and Orange rooms in Bristol, leaving at least a 2.3m gap between the nearest corners.
- This leaves a 5m x 5m space in the middle of each room. 6 students can stand or sit, socially distanced, in this space whilst a tutor explains something.
- Working with 1m+ between tables, we could then have up to 5 tables in a room, with a minimum gap of 1.4m. This could provide for a group of 10, which will not be needed for Diploma courses but might be helpful for Introductory and CPD courses.
- For the time being, however, BCMB will limit bubbles to 8 for all courses, until the new protocols have settled in.
- At the Cart House near Worcester, the space is much bigger. Up to 6 tables can be put up with at least 2m distance in between them.
- The Green room is also available as an overspill – realistically probably just 1 table with 2m social distancing but 2 possible with 1m+.
- Re exam tables, Blue and Orange can accommodate at least 12 at 1m+ perhaps 14. Green can also manage 4 provided other furniture is moved around. It should be possible to have a theory exam for a whole group. Best to have bubbles who arrive and finish at different times. We may need to use a room upstairs if there are 2 or 3 students who need an oral exam. More invigilators will be needed.
- Massage tables. We have purchased wipeable couch covers.
- PPE – BCMB has sourced this for students. There will be no charge whilst they are on the premises. Students may also purchase PPE at cost price for their home practice. BCMB will also sell it on to practitioners in the building.
- Drapes – BCMB will provide these in the normal way. Students will work with the same partner all day and use the same drapes. These will be washed at the end of each day.
- Sanitiser will also be provided and students will need to wipe down equipment after use, just as they will need to when practising professionally.

- Sanitiser stations will be provided throughout the premises.

6. Timetable

a. Practitioners

- Who work from BCMB may start to use the building again from **27th July 2020**.
- This gives time to complete the preparations in the building, including appropriate spacing of furniture, setting up sanitiser stations, developing systems for PPE and so forth.
- Practitioners will receive a full induction into the Covid-secure way of working in BCMB premises.

b. Teaching Diploma Courses

- BCMB will recommence courses on 1st September 2020, using a “hybrid” or “blended” approach (see below).
- Students already in training will be invited back into the building in small groups during July and August. This will be to re-orientate them to the changes in BCMB and have a practice session using PPE. This will rebuild confidence and help to remove the fear of PPE. (4th August update) These practice sessions have now happened and been successful. Most students have adapted to the new ways of doing massage. Some still have reservations over issues such as plastic waste. These concerns will be presented to MTI and GCMT.

c. Introductory and CPD Courses

- Introductory and CPD courses will also start again in September.
- Exactly the same approach and protocols will apply to them in terms of social distancing, use of PPE, bubbles and so forth.
- Bubbles for these courses MIGHT be able to go up to 10 although this will need to be discussed with the Course Leader concerned. To begin with, it would be prudent to confine group size to 8.

7. Hybrid or Blended Approach

- A combination of online learning experience and small practical massage groups or “bubbles” in the BCMB premises.
- Similar to the approach of some UK universities.
- And Scottish schools, who are calling this a “blended” approach.
- Likely to be needed for 12-18 months, perhaps even longer.

a. Online learning

- A combination of
 - Zoom tutorials on a small group or 1-1 basis with an emphasis on discussion and Q&A;

- Students working in pairs or small groups using Zoom breakouts;
- Videos of practical demonstrations to reinforce demos seen at BCMB;
- Online lectures eg of APP
- All as part of a structured learning programme eg “watch video X, now perform tasks Y & Z, discuss with your study buddy, write this up”. This will provide the guided learning hours.
- Online content will follow the MTI guidance issued in May 2020 ie:
 - The APP sections
 - The Business Module
 - Theory of Massage
 - Principles of consultation and case history taking
 - Consultation practice
 - Principles of aftercare
 - Aftercare practice
 - Self-massage for self-care
- Online learning may be scheduled in between course weekends – useful for tutors who live at a distance eg Jude and Sarah Logan.

b. Practice Groups or Bubbles

- Students will be in BCMB in small groups (or “bubbles”) plus a tutor, whom they stay with all day. Phased arrival and departure times so the bubbles do not interact.
- Bubbles on Diploma courses in Bristol may be between 6 and 8 plus a tutor each. Bubbles in Worcester may be up to 10 plus 2 tutors, as the teaching space is bigger.
- Purpose is to practice the hands-on techniques shown during the previous course weekend and get feedback from the tutor.
- See demonstrations of techniques for the forthcoming month, to be supported by written notes, books, video clips and the Zoom tutorials to be held during the month.
- Then the next w/e in the building can concentrate on those techniques which have not landed so well.
- Hence techniques are learnt through: demonstration/reinforcement/Q&A/practice and feedback.

c. Supervised Student Clinics

- Usually BCMB asks students to complete 8 supervised clinic hours. This will be reduced to the MTI minimum requirement of 3.
- Screens may be necessary for clients and tables set up in the format described under Premises. Hence a group of 24 students can be processed in a day, with 2 sessions in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.
- This will allow sufficient time for wiping down and to avoid clients crossing over in the corridor.

d. Different Diploma Courses

- Precisely what is delivered when is up to each Course leader to decide, in consultation with their teaching team.
- It will depend on how far into the course the students are and what they need. Material can be moved in between the normal weekend programmes to fit the hybrid delivery as best as possible.
- For example, courses in the early stages may need to focus more on the group bonding and personal development aspects of the course to provide a foundation for moving forward together.
- Courses in the later stages will be more concerned with providing revision and practice of theory and technique, leading up to exams in the near future.

8. Students not wishing to continue

- Some students have resisted this approach, which is unfortunate. All other aspects of their lives are also affected by the Covid pandemic.
- Students not wishing to engage with the hybrid format may suspend their training and join a later course at no extra cost. Refunds will not be offered unless there are exceptional individual circumstances within the overall exceptional circumstance that is Coronavirus.
- Deferring the training may be of particular value to students who have been shielding and are vulnerable.
- Each case will be considered on its merits.

Andy Fagg

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Agreed by BCMB Board on 14th July 2020; updated on 4th August 2020