

Recommendations from The British Pain Society

The British Pain Society has been contacted by several of its members for some guidance with regards to the running of Pain Clinics and Pain Interventional Lists in light of Covid-19 pandemic.

A large proportion of pain doctors are anaesthetists who are still doing anaesthetic sessions and those who are doing full-time pain medicine and have an anaesthetic background are still better skilled in managing acute emergencies than the average doctor and allied healthcare professionals. These skills and expertise are vital in supporting our colleagues in intensive care and acute medicine who are at the frontline in caring for seriously ill patients with Covid-19 and we are prepared to be redeployed wherever we are needed.

We are committed to put aside our routine clinical work to deal with a situation which is turning out to be a global emergency that needs to be tackled without compromise. It is our responsibility to look after our patients as well as ourselves in these exceptional circumstances. The British Pain Society is making the following recommendations so that we are prepared to deal with the pandemic and also ensuring that our patients are not inconvenienced.

Please discuss with the relevant authorities at your respective hospitals and NHS Trusts to accommodate and adapt this to local needs and strategies.

- Routine clinics may be cancelled and no face-to-face appointments are to be carried out except for urgent cases, specifically: people with CRPS; acute prolapsed disc and cancer.
- Any patient visiting the Pain Clinic should be screened via telephone to rule out potential risk.
- Where feasible, staff members could work from home unless it is essential that their presence is required at the hospital.
- All patients with follow-up appointments should be offered only Telephone / Skype / Facetime / Virtual clinic / NHSAttendAnywhere consultations. These could also be done by specialist nurses, physiotherapists and other allied healthcare professionals.
- The waiting list for new patients should be triaged and a list of patients that are suitable for Telephone / Skype / Facetime / Virtual clinic consultations (depending on patient choice and available technology) may be given to administrative staff who will offer the patient a choice of either taking one of these options or told that they will be placed on a waiting list until we have the go-ahead from the DoH that the threat of Covid-19 is under control.
- Where appropriate and possible, prescriptions should be directed through the GP practice or local pharmacy as much as possible.
- All Pain Management Programmes and group therapy sessions should be suspended.
- All planned routine pain intervention lists should be cancelled. If required, try and limit interventional lists to a minimum (perhaps once a week) and pool all urgent

cases (for example cancer, CRPS, acute radicular pain, other urgent scenarios etc.). This should reduce the strain of theatre and intensive care in terms of staffing and resources.

- Please refrain from wearing PPE for routine pain interventions unless indicated due to Covid-19 exposure; PPE are running short in supply and are vital in dealing with Covid-19 emergencies. Please refer to DoH guidelines on appropriate precautions whilst dealing with low risk patients.
- Please refer to Faculty of Pain Medicine guidance on use of steroids for procedures in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It is advisable to conduct a weekly or twice-weekly review of the situation with your service managers to co-ordinate with your Trusts' strategy to deal with the Covid-19 crisis. CCGs and PCNs should be notified that the Pain Clinics are not running clinics and will not be accepting routine referrals and "clocks" have been stopped until this situation has been addressed.

Some Helpful Web Resources

From Intensive Care Medicine, Royal College of Anaesthetists, Association of Anaesthetists and Intensive Care Society:

<https://icmanaesthesiacovid-19.org/>

Association of Anaesthetists Webinar: COVID-19 update: what you need to know on the frontline:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/5332585620774399500>

Link to NHS AttendAnywhere:

<https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/resourcecentre/Content/Home.htm>

Links to some useful videos on self-management strategies for patients:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HunterBrainman/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXTg1eVjEp06jyz3mNKRtIA>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8BiHclD7geGhiKixXwdzuw>

<https://www.paintoolkit.org/resources/for-patients>

<http://my.livewellwithpain.co.uk/>