

Joint statement on the new COVID restrictions in England

4th November 2020

This is a joint statement issued on behalf of the:

College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy

National Institute of Medical Herbalists

Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners

European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association

Her Majesty's Government published new regulations on Tuesday 3rd November regarding the need for increased restrictions to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus (legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1200/pdfs/ukxi_20201200_en.pdf). The new restrictions will come into effect at 12.00 am on Thursday 5th November in England.

It is key to note that the new legislation does not mention herbal medicine or herbal medicine clinics either directly or indirectly in the list of businesses that must close. Moreover, those businesses that are permitted to remain open include:

“47. Dental services, opticians, audiology services, chiropody, chiropractors, osteopaths and other medical **or health services**, including services relating to mental health.”

It seems completely reasonable to consider herbal medicine practices as “health services”, so there appears to be no legal reason for herbal medicine consultations to stop at this time, with the following provisos:

- The consultation is considered essential in the professional judgement of the practitioner.
- A remote consultation would not be appropriate to ensure effective treatment of the patient.
- Due care is taken to ensure the clinic premises remain COVID-secure.

Practitioners in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and overseas should continue to follow the guidance published specifically for them, e.g.

Northern Ireland: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations

Scotland: gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/

Wales: gov.wales/coronavirus

Working to avoid the spread of the coronavirus between ourselves, our patients and within the wider community remains vitally important. Please continue to observe all guidance previously provided to keep yourself and those around you safe. We will be closely monitoring further developments and will report back to you if anything changes the guidance we have given here.

Please continue to keep yourself safe and well.

Phil Deakin
President of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists

Chris Etheridge
President of the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy and President of the European
Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association

Laura Yarham
President of the Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners