

THE ESSEX

SMILE CENTRE

EST 1968

Where beautiful smiles begin

POST-LOCKDOWN RE-OPENING POLICY

Version 1.0 - 4th June 2020

This policy was last updated on 4th June 2020. It will be kept under constant review and amended as necessary following the evolving circumstances and published guidelines surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic.

After many long weeks in lockdown, we are finally able to welcome back our lovely patients. How we have missed you all.

Since the final week of March, when we were forced to close our doors, we have spent our time planning for the re-opening of our practice. Whilst awaiting the green light from the government, we have been consulting widely with the appropriate authorities to ensure we comply fully with all relevant safety regulations – and we have gone further still, investing in the latest technology, and reviewing all of our working practices, to help ensure patients and staff remain safe at all times.

Now we're back and looking forward to getting those beautiful smiles ready for the summer!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you all for your patience and understanding. Whilst we've been away, we have received so many lovely messages from you and these have meant a lot to us during this very difficult time. Likewise, we hope that you and your love ones have been coping in isolation and staying safe.

During our closure, we had to innovate and find new ways of working, including the introduction of online smile evaluations via video chat, which have proved so popular we intend to continue running many of our initial consultations this way. So, let us know if you'd like us to book you in.

Please continue to bear with us for a while longer. As you can imagine, it was difficult having to close at such short notice, and a large number of cancelled appointments now require scheduling.

Our fabulous team is currently busy restoring some order to our appointment book. If you have outstanding treatments, they will be in touch very soon, but if you have not heard from us by 22nd June, do feel free to give us a call.

A PHASED RETURN FROM 8TH JUNE 2020

From the 8th June, we will begin face-to-face consultations for patients who require urgent assessment and treatment. Until the government provides us with detailed guidance on how to undertake our NHS patient booking, we will be running an on-call service. Please do not call for routine appointments but do get in touch if you are in pain, so that one of our on-call dentists can assess you in the first instance via telephone.

Our implant placement treatments will also re-commence on 8th June, with Deepam back in the practice. If you would like an implant consultation, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

From 22nd June, we'll be extending our opening hours to ensure we can deal with the backlog of checkups and treatment we will need to undertake. From this date, our dentists will be able to see patients with outstanding treatments that could not be completed prior to closing, patients who were due for routine examinations or hygienist visits, as well as patients who are due orthodontic reviews.

CHANGES TO OUR WORKING PRACTICES

So now for the important changes you need to be aware of. This policy document describes the things you will see and details what you'll need to know when you come into the practice. The new procedures contained within have been prepared following detailed risk assessments, which draw on multiple sources within the dental and medical professions, whilst following current government guidance.

Our post-lockdown re-opening policy outlines modifications to our normal working practices that we intend to implement so the practice can be reopened for its intended purpose.

It is not yet known whether these changes will exist for a temporary period or whether they will become permanent features of the way our dental practice will need to operate in order to ensure long-term patient and staff safety. Given the ongoing nature of the research into Covid-19, this policy will likely change in line with new guidance, which will be monitored closely by our Principle Dentists and our management team.

The Essex Smile Centre will be training all staff to practice our newly updated procedures, during scheduled training days leading up to our re-opening.



Travelling to your appointment

- Patients are asked to minimise contact with members of the public on the way to their appointment and avoid using public transport unless this is absolutely necessary.
- Wherever possible, patients are requested to attend their dental appointments alone. You may attend with a carer, child, or parent/guardian if necessary.
- All patient documentation will be sent via email for patients to complete prior to the appointment.
- Patients are asked to attend with minimal personal belongings and will have to place these items into a storage box once inside the surgery (shopping bags are not allowed).
- All patients are required to wear a mask or facial covering. These are available to purchase from the practice for £2.00, of which 50p will be donated to a charitable cause.
- Patients must arrive 5 mins early for their appointment. We may telephone you and ask you to wait outside if your dentist is running late.

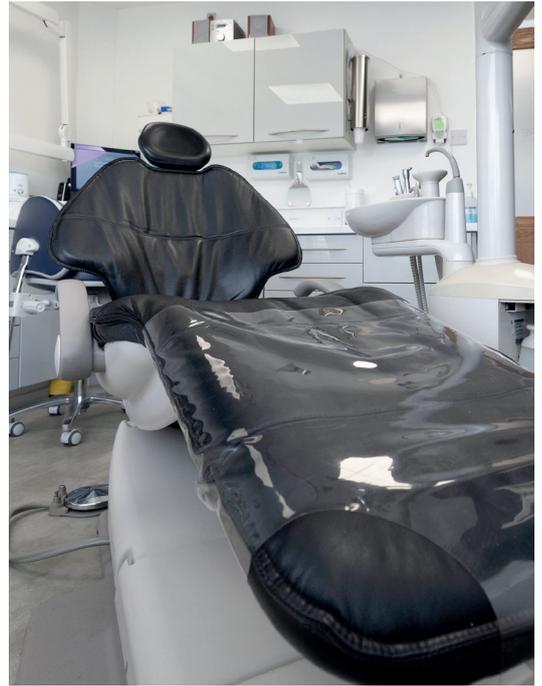
Entering the building

- When you enter the building, you should proceed to the top of the stairs and wait to be greeted there by our 'buddy nurse'. If patients are already waiting at the top of the stairs, please wait at the bottom of the stairs to be called up.
- Our buddy nurse will then escort you to a dedicated zone for hand sanitising and temperature testing. During this time, you will be asked some screening questions.
- If for any reason you fail the temperature test or do not pass the screening criteria, you will be asked to leave the practice and reschedule your appointment.
- You will be asked to place on your mask or facial covering at this stage
- You will then be escorted through to the right-hand side of the reception where you should stop 2 metres from the reception desk, guided by the clear floor markings, whilst you book in.
- Next you will be asked to take a seat in the waiting area. Please note there will be limited seating in the reception area, as we are abiding by strict 2m distancing guidelines, but we will endeavour to keep your wait to a minimum.



Around the practice

- We are now operating a cashless service. Payment can either be made via a chip and pin or contactless card transaction.
- The use of patient toilets will be limited but, if you require use of the facilities, please ask reception for the key.
- Our water fountain will be out of use. Please bring bottled water with you if you require a drink.
- We ask you to bear with our staff members during this time - we are working hard to keep you safe and these policies are new to us all. Verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
- You may find that colleagues are less able than usual to spend time chatting with patients. Please do not be offended, this is purely to keep everybody safe.

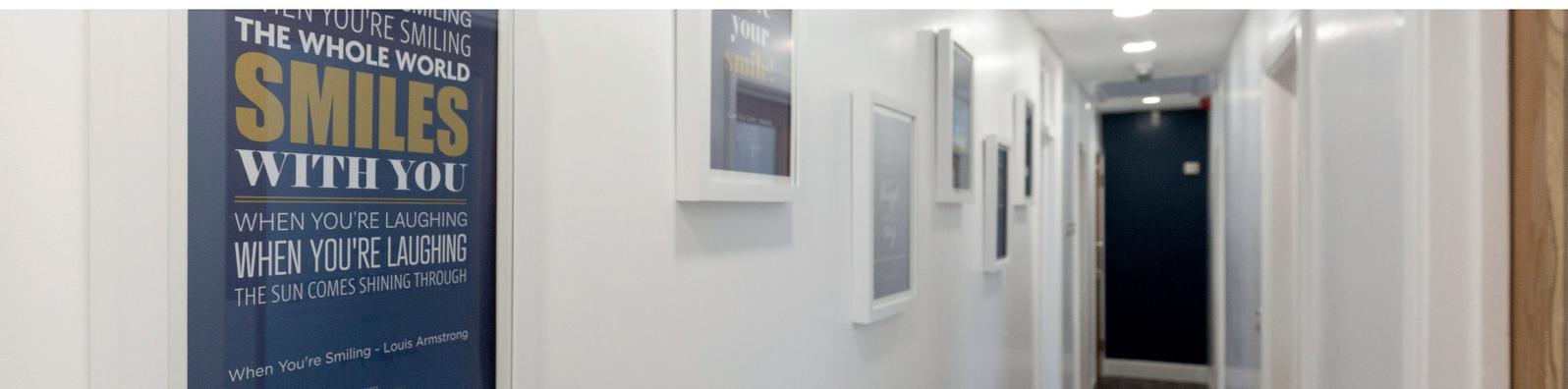


Entering the clinical setting

- When the dentist is ready for you to enter the surgery, you will be called by our practice 'buddy nurse'.
- Once you have entered the surgery you will be greeted by your dentist and nurse who will be wearing full PPE (personal protective equipment).
- You will be asked to place all personal belongings, including your face mask, into a plastic storage box.
- Once seated in the chair, your dental consultation/treatment will commence as usual

Leaving the clinical setting

- Once you have collected your personal belongings, you will be asked to place your



mask on.

- You will be collected from the surgery by our practice 'buddy nurse' and escorted back to the reception desk, where you can book future appointments and make payment if necessary
- You will be allowed to rest in a designated zone before leaving - only if you wish - but are advised not to wherever possible.
- You will stop at the second designated hand sanitising zone upon exit where you can dispose of your mask
- You will then be escorted to the stairs where you can exit
- Once each patient has left the practice setting, a strict cleaning protocol will be followed.

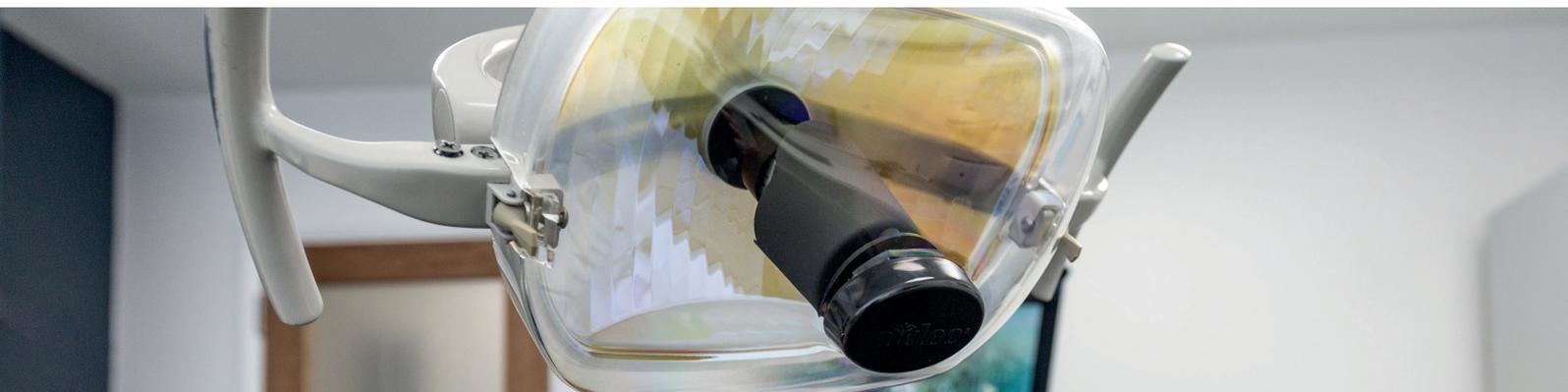
ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING PROCEDURES

At the Essex Smile Centre, we have spent time scrutinising every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items that could potentially be the cause of infection.

As such, all books and patient information (unless laminated) have been removed from the practice, although these will remain readily available at the patients request - most likely via email.

All clinical and communal areas including door handles and surfaces will be cleaned regularly and disinfected in addition to our normal cleaning protocols between patients.

Periods of downtime will be scheduled throughout the day for additional cleaning procedures.





DENTAL PROCEDURES

Our dental team will be using PPE in line with current guidelines.

We are especially mindful that many dental interventions are aerosol generating procedures (AGP's) and it is difficult for us to carry out some dental treatments without the generation of some aerosol.

Aerosol suspended in the air is a theoretical source of infection, which we obviously wish to keep to a minimum. Currently the dental literature suggests:

- The use of high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%
- The use of Rubber Dam where possible reduces bio aerosols by a further 30-90%
- Our regular surgical facemasks filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles
- FFP2 and FFP3 masks filter 94% and 99% respectively of airborne particles in both directions.

We therefore feel that our normal dental procedure can be carried out at minimal risk using high-volume suction, rubber dam, surgical and FFP2 masks.

Along with the above, the Essex Smile Centre has taken additional precautions:

- The practice has been fitted with an air filtration system
- High volume stand-alone suction units have been purchased
- We have implemented the use of pretreatment mouthwash (OraWise+), which has been developed to both reduce the risk of viral load posed by aerosol generating procedures and to assist biofilm management during standard and specialist dental treatment.
- We are using treated water lines with CleanCert dual action waterline treatment, which is biocompatible disinfectant to quickly remove established

biofilm in water and kill viruses to prevent biofilm reforming.

- We have introduced the use of Optizil surface spray with its active ingredient of Hypochlorous acid (HOCl), which is part of a group of small molecules known as reactive oxygen species (ROS). This is the same chemical produced by the human immune defence system to kill viruses and fight infection.

SUMMARY

The vast majority of our patients are healthy, without coronavirus infection, and we are confident of our ability to provide dental care to these patients in as normal environment as possible whilst bearing in mind our responsibilities to mitigate the risks of spreading infection as far as is practically possible.

We do hope you'll be reassured by the information above and feel safe when attending the practice. Please do not be alarmed when you see us in our protective clothing – our staff are still the same lovely, smiley team, but they are now working under somewhat different circumstances.

Below are two pictures demonstrating the protective equipment our dentists will be wearing as they welcome patients back and start work restoring those beautiful smiles. We cannot wait to see you all again. Until then, keep safe and well.



PROTECTION FOR AEROSOL GENERATING PROCEDURES (AGP'S)



PROTECTION FOR NON-AGP'S