

# INTERNATIONAL *therapist*

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## *Accessible to all*

A look at equality and diversity in the industry



**Digestive aid –  
Reflexology and  
aromatherapy for  
clients with IBS**

**Break the fall –  
Exercise interventions  
to prevent injury in  
the elderly**

# Going digital

Returning to practice following the COVID-19 lockdown has meant taking a different, often more technological, approach to business. We take a look at some of the digital systems that can help to make business processes simpler.



**I**t is fair to say that while strict government guidelines are essential for everyone's safety, these have made returning to work very challenging for professional therapists. For many, offering the 'normal' service that was possible pre-COVID-19 is unimaginable at the moment.

At the time of writing, daily life seems to be normalising but on the horizon is the possibility of subsequent waves and challenging economic conditions. Keeping this in mind, there has never been a better time to consider bringing digital systems into your practice. In April, the CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, said 'the world has seen two years' worth of digital transformation in just two months', as a result of businesses needing to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. Use this time as your chance to make positive changes and equip yourself with the tools to help you continue supporting your clients and generating income.

## What does going digital look like?

Change can feel overwhelming but it doesn't need to be. Digitising your practice can be achieved gradually, allowing you to go at a pace that feels right for you and your business. 'Going digital' really is as simple as it sounds, bringing all your processes online. Most likely this will be in two streams, cashless payments and client management — with some digital systems offering both.

Most digital systems work in the 'cloud' which means that you can log in via the internet to a portal. Some systems also provide apps for you to download onto your devices. Whichever system you choose, the providers should have an easy, step-by-step guide to setting up. Whether that's through YouTube videos or a customer service helpline, make sure to use these support systems should you need them.

Not every system will be right for everyone, so if you can, make use of free trials to test what works for you. Keep in mind that each platform may be created to help you achieve a different goal, for example some might be tailored towards helping you to communicate with your clients, while others focus on helping you to keep an organised client information base.

## Setting up

When setting up your online client practice management system, the first thing to do is to input your clients' personal information into the system you have chosen. When you are happy that you have inputted this information securely, it is important to destroy the paper copies of your clients' information using a paper shredder (if you are concerned about GDPR, please see our section on this at the bottom of this feature).

We go on to explain some of the other features that are common for digital systems and how you would set these up to work for your therapy practice.

## Online booking

Online booking systems allow your clients to book in for a treatment from home by simply selecting a date and time that suits them. The system should automatically block out times that are booked and as the business owner, you can select for confirmation to be sent to your client, letting them know the full details of their appointment.

This can also be a useful tool for therapists working in a practice, as it can prevent clients from waiting in a reception area to book in for an appointment. Simply ask your clients to check in via their device before entering the practice or invite them in and provide a device, making sure to adhere to social distancing measures and to clean the device after use.

## Automated client communications

There has never been a more important time for clear and effective

communications to your clients. In the FHT's returning to therapy practice guidelines ([fht.org.uk/coronavirus-guidelines](http://fht.org.uk/coronavirus-guidelines)), we set out that it is good practice to let your clients know the processes you put in place before reopening, to provide COVID-19 pre-treatment questions in addition to their standard consultation form, and to make clients aware of any preparation they need to do before an appointment.

These steps can be streamlined through the use of digital systems. An effective system will make it easy for you to upload the relevant documents and simply select whether to send to clients individually, or to all clients over a set period of time. For example, sending COVID-19 health check forms to clients prior to an appointment.

Automated communications can also make it easy for you to send nice gestures to your clients, such as a 'thank you for returning' or a 'how are you?' Take your time when putting these together to ensure they are genuine, as all-client communications can run the risk of coming across as 'blanketed'.

## Digital consultations

During lockdown many therapists turned to supporting their clients digitally via apps such as Zoom and FaceTime. While these apps provide many benefits (namely being free and easy to use), some client management systems provide an in-built video feature, allowing you to keep all your digital communications in one place.



Below are some key points to look out for when choosing a system for digital consultations:

- End-to-end encryptions
- Simple to use software
- Screen sharing
- Recording capabilities.

## Cashless payments

Cashless payments are perfect for limiting the amount of surfaces you and your clients come into contact with. Some digital systems offer built-in integration of checkout services such as Stripe or PayPal, allowing you to take payment in person or, to minimise contact even further, to send an electronic invoice so your client can pay through the click of a button.

If you're looking to use a separate payment system from your client management system, make sure to look into the different options available and choose the one that's right for you. More information can be found at [softwareadvice.com/uk/online-payment](https://softwareadvice.com/uk/online-payment)

## Data protection (GDPR)

Understandably, anyone considering a new digital system will be mindful of GDPR. GDPR is a series of rights and regulations that must be upheld for all EU and UK citizens. These include things like the right to be forgotten, the right to correction, the right to access and the right to be informed.

It is important to keep in mind that GDPR isn't restricted to digital systems, it includes all personal information regardless of media. The regulations outlined above can prove difficult to uphold if you don't have a digital

system, for example, the right to access requires you to provide every piece of information you hold about your client, within 28 days of their request. Using digital systems this can be achieved through the click of a button, but for paper-based practitioners this could involve scouring files before beginning the pain-staking job of pulling it all together.

Similarly, the right to rectification requires you to correct any errors in your records with anyone that you have sent those records to. Often digital systems can provide a helpful audit trail of every communication relating to a client, making this process easier.

Understanding roles and responsibilities is also key when it comes to GDPR. As the therapist, you are seen as the data controller and your digital systems operator will be seen as the data processor. Using a digital system doesn't automatically mean you are complying with GDPR but your processor will provide you with tools and the support to do so.

## Conclusion

In this feature we hope we have been able to show that you don't need to transform your practice overnight — as with everything, slow and steady wins the race. Set aside some time to consider the first steps you could take towards implementing digital systems that work for your business and make a plan for how you will action those steps. Sit back and feel positive in the thought that you have taken the first steps towards being ready for any challenges that might lie ahead. 🍷



**This information has been supplied by digital systems providers, WriteUpp and Power Diary, discover more about the services offered by the providers below.**

### LEAD CONTRIBUTOR

#### About WriteUpp

WriteUpp will help to streamline your practice, saving time and supporting you in staying connected with your clients. It's an easy to use, affordable practice management system made for clinics and healthcare professionals. Featuring a whole host of tools to help you go digital, including, video consultation, 24/7 online bookings, automated reminders and much more.

[writeupp.com](https://writeupp.com)



#### About Power Diary

Power Diary is a complete practice management system, designed specifically for health clinics. Their software offers pre-written note templates, advanced messaging tools, online bookings and a built-in video call system called Telehealth.

[powerdiary.com](https://powerdiary.com)

