

Guidance

Working with patients outside the UK

Working online makes it possible to work with patients located outside the UK. However, this poses significant challenges, and we would expect that as well as referring to our general guidance for working online, registrants are aware of the possible limitations and duty of care necessary to undertake such work. We would encourage registrants to:

1. Become familiar with [ACTO](#) (Association for Counselling and Therapy Online) or [ISMHO](#) (The International Association of Mental Health Online) guidelines and resources.
2. Assess the suitability of accepting a patient who is located in a different country.
3. Assess how you would manage risk in the event of a patient being very vulnerable or being in contact with other vulnerable individuals.
4. Be familiar with the [International Social Service](#) (ISS), local child protection services, and emergency services in case of immediate safeguarding concerns had to be addressed.
5. Consider the suitability of working online with patients located in countries where the encryption of online platforms cannot be verified and therefore confidentiality may not be possible.
6. Consider the legal requirements of the country where the patient is located. In many countries practicing as a psychotherapist requires a license or medical training and you would be in breach of the local laws when offering psychotherapy or counselling services without the license required to practice in that specific jurisdiction.
7. Consider having in place a contract that clearly states how you would manage risk issues and which legal jurisdiction would apply in case of any legal disputes. However, be aware that there may be cases where the patient's legal system may not recognise the contract as binding.
8. Ensure your professional liability insurance covers your online work across different jurisdictions.