**Supplementary File 6 Trial strategies to maintain participant blinding**

We integrated several processes within the design and development of the trial to ensure this was as effective as possible. These included;

1. Designing the placebo splints with patient partners to ensure that we received feedback about their credibility
2. *Carefully designing the trial’s patient information sheet wording alongside our patient partners. We asked our patient partners to help us construct and review our patient information sheet using words and terms that were most credible and would optimise blinding. We checked the wording of this with our clinical experts and clinical academic team. Our patient information sheet detailed;*

*“We will randomly select one of three specific therapy approaches to treat your thumb. We don’t yet know which approach is the most useful one and this is why we are comparing them. The study includes different treatment options. There is a chance that a part of your treatment will include a placebo (dummy) element. You will not be told if you are receiving a placebo treatment at any point during the three-month trial. However, in all these treatment options you will receive optimal occupational therapy/physiotherapy self-management care (as normally available on the NHS). You may or may not also receive a splint to wear”.*

1. *We also checked and verified the patient information sheet wording within our pilot study to see if patients could determine to which treatment arm they had been allocated. The feedback from pilot patients verified that participant blinding was effective using this wording.*
2. *The trial was designed to be implemented across several NHS clinics with different out- patient booking processes. The trial processes were designed to ensure that across these varying booking processes, participants did not see, nor be treated alongside, other trial participants. We very carefully designed our trial alongside clinical stakeholders to ensure this was possible across numerous NHS sites.*
3. *During the trial we did not receive any information to suggest that blinding was ineffective, nor that participants were being contaminated by seeing other trial participants, during our quality assurance site visits carried out as detailed in our published protocol [10].*
4. *We have also carried out a qualitative study alongside this quantitative analysis (manuscript in preparation) and there was no evidence within the qualitative interviews that participants were unblinded to group allocation.*