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## A. INTRODUCTION

### Overview

Despite the relaxation of the majority of Government restrictions relating to COVID-19, it remains critical that Clubs mitigate against the risk of the spread of the virus amongst their players, staff, media and supporters.

The terms of the EFL's 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol must be adhered to as part of the Clubs' matchday media operation. The media operation should form part of Clubs' Multi-disciplinary Risk Assessments.

Following the same principles of the 2021-22 First Team Training and Matchday Protocols, these Matchday Media Protocols are split into the following:

GREEN Protocols

RED Protocols

Under the GREEN Protocol, matchday operations can operate in line with the relaxation of Government restrictions, though their remains the need for caution and, as per the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocols, Risk Assessments will be required to mitigate against the spread of the virus.

To facilitate a return to some pre-COVID media operations, this season Clubs will be required to operate a Purple Zone for the purpose of pre-and-post match interviews. Further details on the Purple Zone are detailed below.

Clubs should have contingency plans in place to revert to RED Protocols should the need arise (i.e. the COVID-19 situation deteriorates, whether as a result of an outbreak, the spread of a new variant or otherwise), with guidance to support these plans detailed below.

As such, measures for the optimisation of social distancing and all Government recommended hygiene measures should be included within matchday media operation plans.

Clubs will need to mitigate against the spread of the virus based on their own facilities and will need to work with their designated COVID-19 Stadium Operations Officer to provide a safe media operation that facilitates the requirements as set out in EFL Regulations.

Whilst as a minimum Clubs must comply with Government requirements, Clubs may also wish to introduce their own measures and mitigations based on their own COVID-19 Risk Assessments.

Media Organisations may request access to Risk Assessments/Policy or conduct their own for staff attending stadia on matchdays.

The below protocols are provided to support Clubs in forming their operational plans for the new season.

## B. GREEN PROTOCOL

### Zoning

#### Red Zone

- As per the terms of the First Team Matchday Protocol, the Red Zone should become active at least three-and-a-half hours before kick-off.
- Red Zone access can be requested and should be provided to a minimum of three Club media staff (per Club)
  - Should the Home Club's Risk Assessment allow, Clubs are permitted to allow further Club media staff into the Red Zone (when working under GREEN protocols).
  - The number of Club Media staff permitted into the Red Zone is a matter for the Home Club to decide as part of their Risk Assessment.
  - While the minimum requirement of three Club media staff (per Club) is set out as a general rule, Home Clubs who cannot facilitate these numbers safely as per their Risk Assessment should enter into good faith discussions with their opponent, providing sufficient notice to allow for the Away Club to plan their media operation.
- As detailed under 'Media Numbers' below, a small number of broadcast staff should be permitted to the Red Zone for fixtures selected for live broadcast
- Red Zone access is only permitted to personnel who have:
  - Satisfactorily passed a Club's screening protocol to detect symptoms of COVID-19 infection as per the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol
  - Completed a Self-Declaration form to state that they have received and agree to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy.
- As per the terms of the First Team Matchday Protocol, Home Clubs must ensure that access the Red Zone on a matchday is not permitted unless individuals have satisfactorily passed a screening protocol
- A strict accreditation process should be put in place that ensures only staff relevant and essential to the Red Zone gain access
- Any staff member operating within this area who does not form part of the First Team Training Ground Protocols (i.e. non-Players and Football Staff) should maintain social distancing from First Team Players and Football Staff.
- Clubs should review the list of individuals with access to the Red Zone who are deemed as essential to the media operation, periodically.
- Despite the relaxation of restrictions, it is recommended – save for those exempt – that PPE is worn by media staff in indoor settings in the Red Zone

#### Guidance

*Self-Declaration forms agreeing to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy are not required to be submitted on a game-by-game basis. Once a Media Representative has submitted their form to the Club, they do not have to do this for future matches unless the Policy changes. As per the terms of the First Team Matchday Protocol, the COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy should include guidance as to the process by which the Cleared Individual can opt out of the policy at a later date, should they chose to do so.*

#### Purple Zone

- As per the 2021-22 Matchday Protocols, the Purple Zone is an indoor area:
  - For pre-match interviews and essential pre-match activity
  - For post-match interviews with broadcast media and Post Match Press Conferences, where possible
  - In which representatives of broadcasters entitled to be present in the Stadium in line with Regulations must be located
  - Which is in close proximity to the Red Zone
- Access to the Purple Zone should be limited to:
  - Essential personnel for the facilitation of pre- and post-match media activity

- A maximum number of personnel for indoor interview areas as per Club Risk Assessment
- Only those personnel who have:
  - Completed a Self-Declaration form to state that they have received and agree to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy.
- A strict accreditation process should be put in place that ensures only staff relevant and essential to the Purple Zone gain access.
- Like the Red Zone, the Purple Zone should become active at least three-and-a-half hours before kick-off.
- Contact between First Team Players and Football Staff and Matchday Personnel (Media) should be socially distanced.
- Whilst most broadcast interviews (TV/Radio) can take place in the designated Purple Zone, with social distancing practiced, it may be more challenging for Clubs to facilitate indoor, socially-distanced Press Conferences for the written media
- Where within Risk Assessments it is deemed that an in person Post-Match Press Conference cannot be facilitated safely, Clubs can choose to host a Virtual Post-Match Press Conference (VPMPC) as per the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons.
- As below under 'Post-Match Media':
  - Clubs have the option to host Virtual Post Match Press Conferences, should this be preferential
  - The Home Club should advise the Away Club of their Post-Match Media procedures at least 24 hours prior to kick-off to allow for the Away Club to adapt their approach as necessary

Clubs will be provided with both moveable perspex and static interview backdrops for use in indoor and/or outdoor areas. These backdrops must be used for all pre- and post-match interviews (broadcast).

Where, due to the configuration of the Stadium, it is not possible to facilitate pre- and/or post-match interviews in a socially distanced way within the Purple Zone (indoors) - i.e. with social distancing maintained between Players & Football Staff and non-Players & Football Staff - such interviews must be conducted in an outdoor pitchside presentation position.

### **Guidance**

*Media (both external and Club) should optimise social distancing in the Purple Zone to avoid close contact with Players and/or Football Staff. A screening protocol for the Purple Zone isn't a requirement under the Matchday Media Protocols, though Clubs may wish to introduce their own measures and mitigations based on their own COVID-19 Risk Assessments.*

### **Accreditation**

- Media and Broadcast will be able to apply for accreditation via the i-PBS and Clubs will be able to accept or decline media requests as usual.
- Via i-PBS, Media and Broadcast will be able to request access to the Red Zone and/or Purple Zone as required via the Comment function – entry will be permitted at Club's discretion on the basis that the representative has met the criteria detailed within the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol, including:
  - Satisfactorily passed a screening protocol to detect symptoms of COVID-19 infection as per the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol
  - Completed a Self-Declaration form to state that they have received and agree to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy.
- Via the accreditation system, Media will still be able to request access to a Virtual Post-Match Press Conference (VPMPC) – the system will prompt the applicant to provide the email address of the media representative who requires access to the VPMPC.
- Access to the VPMPC will be decided by Clubs
- An automated accreditation response will go to accredited media via the i-PBS
- Accreditation should be collected on site, via a dedicated collection point
- Accredited representatives should download the i-PBS mobile app which will be used to verify identity at a club's media entrance
- Clubs should ensure media are provided with the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy by 5pm, two days out from the match i.e. (5pm on Thursday for a Saturday 3pm match). This should include:
  - A map outlining access and egress points, accreditation collection points, parking and Zoning for media

- A Self-Declaration form to be completed to state that they have received and agree to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy.
- The Self-Declaration form must be signed and returned to Clubs prior to entry to the Stadium

The i-PBS online accreditation system will continue to manage Broadcast and Media accreditation; however, the accessible zones will be amended to reflect the new working restrictions.

The key changes are as follows:

- Stadium access to be reinstated
- Pitchside access to be reinstated
- Gantry, TV Studio and Press Box remain as operational zones (no zoning required)
- Interview Area access (indoors) (Purple Zone)
- Pitchside Presentation Position (Purple Zone)
- Press Conference, Press Lounge, Observation Seat to be reinstated

The i-PBS will install a Red and Purple zoning system through the addition of Special Access Dispensations (SAD) pass, which can be printed from the system alongside the standard matchday pass.

An additional Tunnel Rigging SAD will be added to the system and all other SADs will be removed. Please note that all rigging in the Red Zone must be completed 3.5 hours before Kick-Off.

### Health Checks

- Media with access to the Red Zone must satisfactorily pass a screening protocol to detect symptoms of COVID-19 infection as per the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol.
- All Media Personnel must also complete a Self-Declaration Form to state that they have received and agree to be bound by the Club's COVID-19 Stadium Operations Policy.
- Provisions should be made so any media who develop COVID-19 symptoms on site on Matchday can access a dedicated Isolation Room, as per the 2021-22 First Team Match Day Protocols.

### Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Persons

As per the terms of the First Team Matchday Protocol, an appropriate risk assessment should be conducted for individuals that are deemed to be clinically (extremely) vulnerable, especially if they haven't or can't be vaccinated (in line with Government guidance)

*Employers may wish to carry out their own Risk Assessment or to view Club Risk Assessments as part of this provision.*

### Security

- In line with Stadium Regulations, Media bag and 'pat down' checks should be facilitated at the point of entry
- Media should be instructed to not bring oversized bags where possible
- Media should open their own bags and show the contents of their bag under instruction from security staff
- Photo identification should be produced on collection of match day accreditation to ensure the appropriate personnel access the stadium.

### Media Numbers

While the numbers permitted to the Press Box are subject to Clubs' wider Risk Assessments, there is a minimum requirement for Rights Holder media as below – in exceptional circumstances where minimum Rights Holder numbers cannot be met, Clubs should enter into good faith discussions with the League and Media Organisation to find a solution.

The League recommends social distancing is maintained in Press Boxes, where possible.

### Rights Holders

- Club Media
  - Clubs should permit a minimum of four Club media representatives (inc. commentators) to the Press Box
  - Clubs should also permit a minimum of one Club Photographer per Club

- Data Partners
  - 2x Betgenius (minimum)
  - 1x Opta (minimum)
- Talksport
- 3x (Live Commentary Fixtures) (minimum)
- 1x (Non-Commentary Fixtures) (minimum)

*BBC Radio / Independent Radio will have agreements with the majority of EFL Clubs and should be provided for as a minimum as follows:*

- BBC – National (x1)
- BBC – Home Club (x2), Away Club (x2)
- Independent Radio – (x2) – where requested

### **Non-Rights Holders**

To ensure strong coverage for EFL competitions, the League recommends that Clubs endeavour to facilitate written media (local and national) from the remaining numbers permitted within individual Risk Assessments.

If numbers are limited, Clubs should only look to permit one person per media title.

### **Matches Selected for Live Broadcast**

Provided they meet the criteria to enter the Red Zone as set out in the Matchday Protocol and pass the Club's screening within the Club's Risk Assessment, the following individuals should be permitted to the Red Zone for fixtures selected for live broadcast:

- 1x Floor Manager
- 1x Stedi-cam Operator
- 1x Stedi-cam Assistant
- 1x Match Manager
- 2x HD Signs Staff – to put out live match assets (must socially distance)

**Note:** The above numbers are still to be confirmed, though should they change, they will only be subject to a slight increase – this will be communicated in a finalised document in due course.

### **Goal Line Technology**

Goal line technology will be in place for all Championship fixtures. Hawkeye operatives will require access to the Red Zone and will maintain social distancing at all times.

### **Travel**

As per the terms of the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol, each Club must ensure that it complies with all applicable Government guidance in relation to transport to and from the League Match.

- Where possible, it is recommended that media travel to matches alone
- Clubs should provide accredited media with access to parking, where possible
- Should media travel to matches via public transport, guidance on public transport should be followed in relation to both social distancing and PPE.

### **Hygiene**

- Clubs should follow the Government guidance cleaning guidelines for non-healthcare settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

This should include:

- Providing handwashing facilities and hand sanitiser in locations in which the Media are situated
- Ensuring that where Food and Drink is provided to Press, handwashing facilities and hand sanitiser are provided

- Ensure that handwashing and hand sanitiser facilities are checked and refilled regularly

### Opening/Closing Times

- While opening times should be at the discretion of each Club, media should be encouraged to enter the Stadium before supporter arrivals to reduce contact
- Media with access to the Red Zone/Purple Zone should endeavour to arrive at the Stadium in advance of supporter arrivals to reduce contact
- Media with access to the Red Zone should arrive to allow time for the completion of a Club's screening protocol
- Again, the closing of press facilities will be at the discretion of each Club, in line with their respective Risk Assessments, though press facilities should be accessible for media for a minimum of two hours after the final whistle

### Press Room / Media Facilities

- Press Lounges are permitted to be opened under operating guidelines set out in Club Risk Assessments
- As part of Risk Assessments, maximum capacities should be set for Press Lounges
- The League recommends PPE (face coverings) to be worn in indoor settings and social distancing to be applied where possible
- The provision of food and drink within Press Lounges is also a matter for Clubs to determine within their Risk Assessments, though bottled water should be made available to media personnel.
- Provisions should be in place to ensure adequate ventilation in indoor settings such as the Press Lounge
- Clubs should make provisions to ensure usual minimum standards are met in relation to Wi-Fi and Desks, so press attending Virtual Post Match Press Conferences can do so from the Press Box (outside) where preferred and/or appropriate.

### Pre-Match Media

- Pre-match media activity should take place within the Purple Zone and should be restricted to essential/rights-holders
- There should be no pre-match media activity with non-rights holders on matchday
- Where necessary, non-rights holder media should have access to the content of rights holder interviews
- Team sheets should be produced digitally where possible and where a paper teamsheet is produced, the distributor should wear appropriate PPE (gloves).

### Post-Match Media

- Club and Rights Holder (Broadcast) interviews to take place in person in the Purple Zone, where possible
- Where, due to the configuration of the Stadium, it is not possible to facilitate post-match interviews in a socially distanced way within the Purple Zone (indoors) - i.e. with social distance maintained between Players & Football Staff and non-Players & Football Staff) - such interviews must be conducted in an outdoor pitchside presentation position
- Post-Match Press Conferences can take place physically within the Purple Zone, though maximum numbers, social distancing and adequate ventilation should all be considered as part of Risk Assessments
- Where within Risk Assessments it is not deemed safe to conduct Post-Match Press Conferences in the Purple Zone, they should take place virtually, giving access to both those at the game and those accredited media who choose not to attend the game but wish to attend the press conference via video link
- Clubs have the option to host Virtual Post Match Press Conferences, should this be preferential
- The Home Club should advise the Away Club of their Post-Match Media procedures at least 24 hours prior to kick-off to allow for the Away Club to adapt their approach as necessary
- Clubs should manage individual agreements (i.e. with BBC local radio) as required, but with consideration to the above factors
- Managers should conduct their post-match media conference within 30 minutes of the final whistle.

### Photographers

- Photographers to apply as per the usual process with accreditation at the Clubs discretion based on the numbers permitted within Risk Assessments
- Those numbers should include a minimum of:
  - 1x Home Club
  - 1x Away Club
  - 1x Shutterstock (EFL Agency Partner)
  - 6x Agency/Publishers
- Photographers are not permitted to access the Red Zone, unless accredited by the Club in line with Red Zone protocols
- As per arrangements for Press Lounges as above, Photographers' Lounges at stadiums can be opened
- Pitchside internet access should be provided to Photographers



## C. RED PROTOCOL

Where the League determines that a Club needs to be subject to the RED Protocol in accordance with the First Team Matchday and Training Protocols (i.e. local restrictions or an outbreak at the Club), the League will notify the Club of the requirement to move to the RED Protocol along with the specific requirements that the Club must comply with.

While any decision as to the imposition and nature of implementation of RED Protocols - as per the 2021-22 First Team Matchday Protocol - will be at the discretion of the League, prior to taking any such decision it will procure advice from the EFL Medical Advisors and consult with the relevant Club.

While the specifics of any RED Protocol will be for the League (at its absolute discretion) to determine, for the avoidance of doubt they will include all of the following:

- a regime for testing (either PCR or lateral flow or other) of Players, Football Staff and other Staff with access to the Red Zone
- restrictions on the attendance of Supporters (including limitation on attendance of Supporters of the Visiting Club)
- restrictions on the use of indoor spaces within the Stadium
- restriction on the preparation and service of food and beverages
- restrictions on manual therapy by Staff
- restrictions on the use of showering or bathing facilities, ice baths and/or cryogenic chambers
- defined limits on numbers in the Red Zone and/or reduced numbers in (or cessation of) the Purple Zone
- requirements to modify facilities (including changing rooms and trainers' benches) to enable social distancing among Players and Football Staff
- requirements in respect of personal protective equipment
- additional monitoring measures to ensure compliance with the Protocols

By way of example, the following processes are likely to be implemented under RED Protocols for the matchday media operation, many as per the 2020/21 season.

### Red Zone

Red Zone access will be restricted to a **maximum** of two Club Media staff, with all personnel in the Red Zone requiring a negative COVID-19 test result (as per EFL guidance).

### Purple Zone

Working under Red Protocols, the Purple Zone should only be in operation in an outdoor setting for essential activity to fulfil broadcast requirements only, while social distancing must also be practiced as per normal Purple Zone requirements.

All other media should take place virtually.

### Media Numbers

Media numbers will be capped in line with 2020-21 Protocols, including:

- A maximum of 2x Club Media Staff per Club in the Red Zone
- Restrictions on Red Zone and on site staff for fixtures selected for live broadcast as per the 2020-21 season
- Data Partners:
  - 2x Betgenius
  - 1x Opta
- Talksport
  - 3x (Live Commentary Fixtures)

- 1x (Non-Commentary Fixtures)
- BBC Radio / Independent Radio (Maximum)
  - BBC – National (x1)
  - BBC – Home Club (x2), Away Club (x2)
  - Independent Radio – (x2)
- Non-rights holders (Maximum of one per media title) – Maximum of 20
- Maximum of 9 Photographers
  - 2x Club Photographer (One Home, One Away)
  - 1x Shutterstock (EFL Agency Partner)
  - 6x Agency/Publishers

*The above would be used for guidance in the instance of RED protocols being implemented, with figures at Club discretion based on the facilities at their disposal and ensuring social distancing requirements can be maintained.*

### **Media Room / Facilities**

Press and Photographers' Lounges should be closed when Clubs are working under Red Protocols.

Save for providing media with bottled water, no other food or beverages should be provided to media. All working personnel should bring their own food (if required).

### **Press Box**

- Social distancing should be in place throughout
- No cross-contamination between the Press Box and Red Zone should take place (Media staff who are in the Red Zone should be seated away from the Press Box)

### **Health Checks**

- Media and photographers will be subject to a health screening before entry to the stadium is permitted.

### **Travel**

- Media or photographers must not travel to the Stadium together, unless living in the same household, and should only use public transport for the journey to the Stadium where absolutely necessary and in line with Government guidance

### **Arrival Times**

- Media and photographers should spend the minimal amount of time in the Stadium
- There should be a split approach upon arrival to avoid delays, for example:
  - KO –90 mins for accredited broadcast media
  - KO –75 mins for accredited written press
  - Access not permitted before these times
  - Photographer access permitted from KO -60 mins
- All media and photographers to either file offsite, or from their set position, to reduce the time spent inside the stadium
- Press facilities to be closed at Club discretion, but a maximum of 2.5 hours after the final whistle

**Note:** *Limited Club Media representatives are permitted entrance prior to the above times as deemed necessary.*

### **PPE**

- Face coverings should be worn, save for Broadcasters whilst on air only.

### **IT**

- Clubs should consider providing media with an IT 'hotline' to contact relevant members of the IT department, or ensure that the Club Media Contacts within the Press Box have contact details for IT support.