



Medical Advisory Note -

“Omicron Variant”

Clarification of Red Protocols

Q&A

17 December 2021



Testing Process

1. Most importantly, the lateral flow tests have limited predictive value with Omicron, even if used daily (only useful for a few hours).
2. As we discussed, the interventions to reduce spread are the critical measures in slowing down transmission such as distancing, mask wearing and air flow. If anyone complains about the cold, remember in Winter you only need to slightly open windows either side for good cross-ventilation.
3. There may be a risk that those testing negative at the beginning of a day believe that they are 'safe' for the next 24 hours. This is not true and there are documented mass outbreaks to suggest otherwise. I encourage you to communicate this to your colleagues.
4. As you are aware, we continue to work with Surescreen to get supplies out to clubs as soon as possible. We aim to reach all clubs by the end of next week Friday 24 December.
5. These remain our preferred brand for reasons we discussed yesterday including confirmation of detection of Omicron, approval by PHE (Porton Down) and performance against other brands. We cannot comment on the utility of other brands.
6. Once your supply has arrived, daily testing should be conducted *for all First Team Members and Staff*.
7. To remain in line with previous protocols, as a minimum the *matchday minus 1 test* should be supervised by a medical practitioner.
8. From a clinical perspective, critical tests include
 - a. Away Team – Before Travel/Before Match
 - b. Home Team – Before Match

The implications of this are that you may wish to time your tests accordingly so that they occur as close to the higher risk activities.

Given the short incubation period for Omicron, there may for example be reasonable grounds to test twice on the same day in certain circumstances – for example first thing in the morning before a training session, and subsequently before travelling to an away match later on in that day. The practicalities will leave to your discretion.

9. Those that test positive for COVID-19 can continue to be excluded from the testing pool for the subsequent 90 days. This will remain under review.

If anyone excluded from the pool does however develop relevant symptoms, they should be tested accordingly.
10. We are experiencing a series of conflicting LFT/PCR results. In these cases, please discuss with medical advisors.

Mitigation Measures

1. To reiterate, there is no reason why other than those delivering treatment, that anyone should be within 1 meter for 1 minute or 2 meters for 15 minutes of another person in the training ground without some form



of respiratory protection. Therefore, we do not expect clubs to reporting close contacts from normal training ground activities. Travel and rooming should also be arranged accordingly to avoid close contact status, such as pairing vaccinated/unvaccinated.

2. There is no need for temperature checks, these are next to useless and not part of our EFL protocols since last summer.
3. There is no requirement for clubs to conduct any additional activities outside of these protocols for the purpose of matches. Some clubs are asking the away side to complete a short declaration form regarding the symptom status of their players/staff which is the most one we would expect.
4. You may wish to arrange for a car at away matches to transport individuals back should they become symptomatic/test positive.

Any Other Business

1. **Vaccinated household contacts** are at higher exposure risk than if they were exposed in other settings simply as a function of time spent around the case. It was raised yesterday that Rugby is isolating vaccinated household contacts for this reason.

We shall leave this decision to each clubs' discretion as to whether to isolate these individuals due to this risk or for example, increase restrictions and twice daily testing. If in doubt, please do discuss these cases with us.

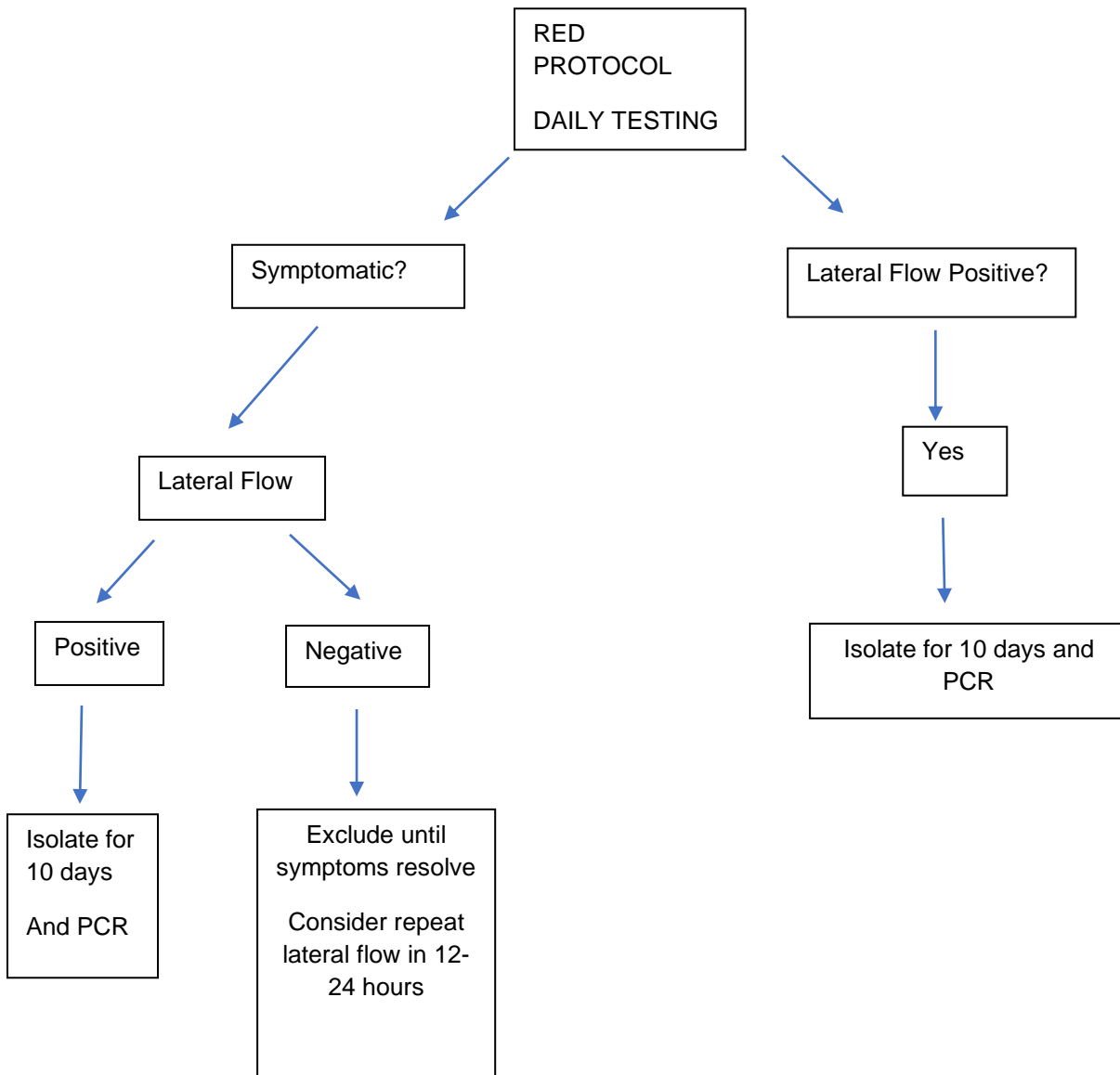
2. These measures are designed to slow down transmission. As things stand with a predominantly open society, we anticipate most if not all clubs to have cases even due to community transmission alone. With the subsequent exclusion of cases from the testing pool, this should consequently increase the relative availability of tests down the line (re: general point)
3. We shall discuss with Nationwide re: on-call support for results

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SUGGESTED OUTBREAK RESPONSE

Dr. Subhashis Basu & Dr. Richard Higgins



Case Management Flow Chart



Exclude Unvaccinated/Partial Vaccinated Close Contacts (Household, Car, Hotel Room Share) from when case tests positive or when their symptoms started (whichever earliest)

No one should need to be excluded due to training ground contact, and all but household above is avoidable

If an Outbreak (3 or more cases) – Discuss with Medical Advisors. As things stand however there are few, if any, grounds to fully close a training facility.