



COVID-19

Management of the Indoor

Environment

Update for Clubs

January 2021



January 2020 Update – Indoor Environment

This document is primarily aimed at COVID-19 Officers and Covid-19 Operational Officers with a health and safety background, but the recommendations will need support from Senior Management and from Covid-19 Medical Officers.

Dear Colleagues,

Clubs have recently been required to review and update their operational protocols to ensure they are as robust as possible, paying particular attention to social distancing and hygiene measures in place at the venue. A copy of this correspondence can be found later in this document.

This document has been produced to update and remind regarding COVID-19 risk minimization, some of which was previously covered in our update of November 2020. We know from the data that where Clubs are implementing these measures well, training grounds and stadia thus far are not acting as a vector for sustained transmission in most instances.

The tone of this document is stronger, but with good reason, as we wish to keep it that way. The emergence of a new, more transmissible variant has placed an additional responsibility to address these issues in our clubs, and for all staff and players to adhere to basic occupational health principles of physical distancing, wearing facial coverings and personal hygiene. *These measures can and in some clubs has halted transmission of the new variant, but requires strict compliance.*

The overwhelming majority of outbreaks we have seen across the EFL are linked to:

1. Travel – Car and Coach
2. Team Meetings
3. Whilst there is more limited direct evidence for changing and dining, we must apply the precautionary principle in these areas.

I know that many clubs have already taken substantial steps in these and other areas but hope that this document covering environmental factors will be helpful to all as the principle continue to apply. If there are further questions, please contact me at Subhashis.basu@nhs.net

Dr Subhashis Basu
Occupational Medicine Advisor to the EFL



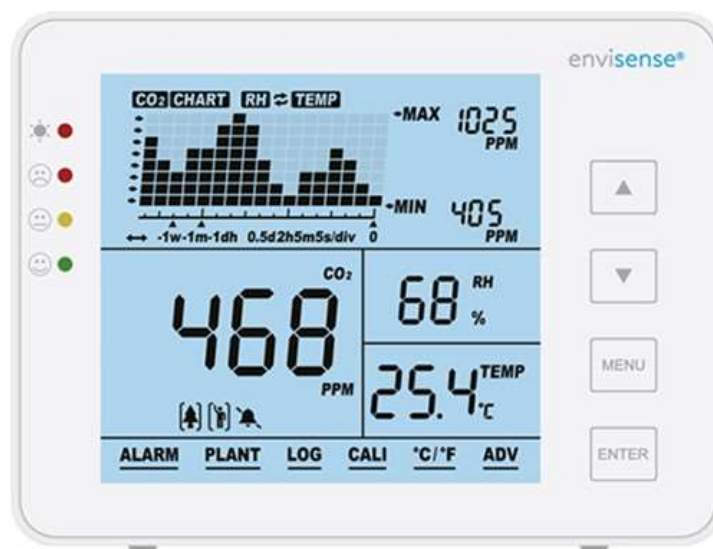
Environment

This is primarily aimed at indoor areas but is also applicable to travel.

In addition to previous recommendations regarding physical distancing, and wearing of facial coverings:

1. Ventilation – Natural is best. We would recommend that air conditioning is switched off.
If artificial, a fresh air supply is strongly recommended. Ensure filters and the system are well maintained. Aim for as many air changes per hour you can, but at least 6 as an absolute minimum. Aim for a carbon dioxide reading of no higher than 800ppm and we would advise against continuing to occupy a room with a reading >1000ppm. People should leave the room until the ppm drops below 600.
2. Humidity – Maintain at 40-60%. Do not drop below 40%. Heating will dry out the air, so be mindful of this.
3. Temperature – By law minimum temperatures in offices should be no lower than 16 Celsius. The exact influence of temperature on the virus is not certain but spread appears to be less effective at 20-24 Celsius

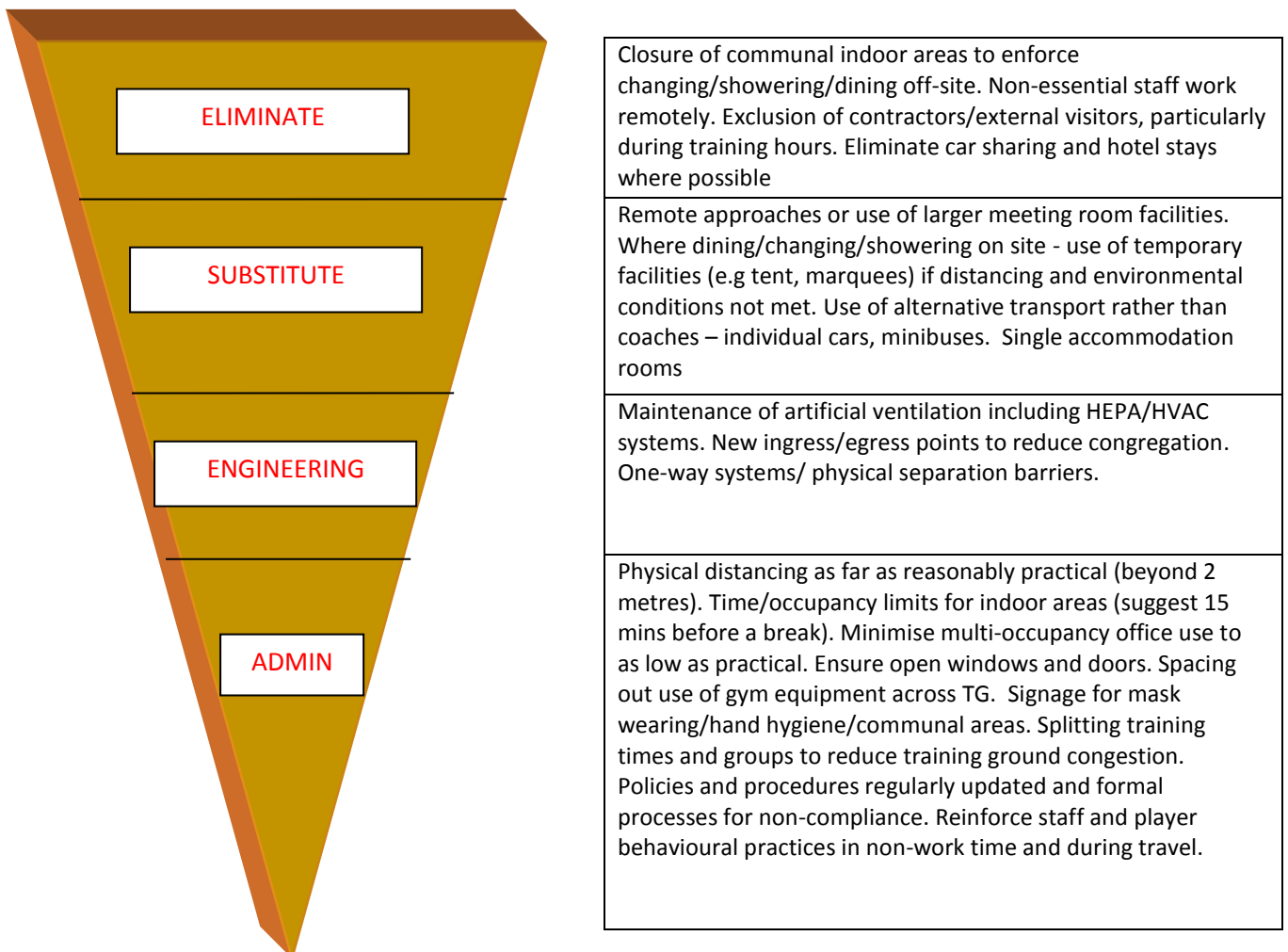
Simple environmental monitors are useful adjuncts. Numerous are available online of which one below is an example (please note Envisense is not specifically promoted by the EFL)





Hierarchy of Controls

An email was sent to all clubs a few days ago outlining the organisational measures which we recommend as the gold-standard approach to mitigating COVID-19 transmission risk. Risk mitigation follows a hierarchy as you will be familiar with but for clarity, I have included an example below. It is not exhaustive, and naturally there is overlap between categories, but intended to reflect the thought processes behind a COVID-19 risk assessment. Some examples are drawn from best practice in clubs. **In addition to facial coverings/medical PPE in all indoor areas:**



Whilst much of this is commonsense, the temptation is to compromise on the measures by moving down the pyramid where 'alternatives' exist. We advise against this practice as human factors are still relevant, such as the temptation for prolonged social interaction during meetings, travel, and other group activities even in well-organized facilities. Feedback from clubs indicate marshalling this can be cumbersome for those charged with doing so.



4.

Copy of Recent Correspondence

To: Chief Executives,
Club Secretaries
Head of Medical
Covid-19 Medical Officers
Covid-19 Officers
Covid-19 Operational Officers

Dear Colleague,

Requirement to Update Covid-19 Operational Protocols

As a result of the current Covid-19 situation and the emergence of a much more easily transmitted strain of the Covid-19 virus our Medical Advisors, upon discussion with PHE and DCMS, have concluded that more stringent measures are required to minimise and mitigate the risk of transmission of the virus in the Training Ground environment. Whilst it is unrealistic to believe that no one will contract the virus, our aim is to keep infection rates below that in the community and other industries. As such Clubs are required to adopt the following polices immediately. These principles are consistent with the initial Stage 1 and 2 Protocols and seek the closure of high risk indoor areas and ensure usage of other areas is limited to as low as reasonably practical.

Following yesterday's Government announcement we expect these measure to be in place for at least 4-6 weeks and/ or until a further update can be provided:

- Clubs must review their Training Ground Policies to ensure they are as robust as possible, paying particular attention to social distancing and hygiene measures in place at the venue.
- Attendance at the Training Ground should be limited to Players and essential Staff only. (Note: appropriate drop-off / pick-up arrangements can be made for Academy Players and the attendance of "Player Support" (e.g. parents, guardians, family members) at Academy Games remains dependent upon the Home Clubs risk assessment).
- The use of indoor areas must be minimised as much as possible. Social areas must be closed and there must be no congregation in communal areas at the Training Ground, including but not limited to medical rooms.
- Indoor training pitches and domes are permitted to be used providing these are well ventilated and appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.
- Face coverings must be worn at all times in any indoor area.
- Changing Rooms should be closed (save for the use of the toilet / or hand basin) and where possible Players and Staff members should arrive at the Training Ground wearing the clothes in which they are to train. Where this is not possible (for players and staff who live a considerable distance away) usage of



the changing room should be single occupancy and limited to 15 minutes maximum. This may require Clubs to consider a staggered approach to arrival times and usage. (Note: the provision of changing room usage for Academy games at the Training Ground remains dependent upon the Home Clubs risk assessment).

- Manual therapy treatment must be limited to essential only as deemed by the Club Doctor. Where permitted, it must last no longer than 15 minutes and be conducted in a well ventilated area. Players must wear a facial covering as a minimum and the practitioner must wear a standard surgical face mask.
- Poorly ventilated gym areas where social distancing cannot be maintained must be closed. Clubs must modify their gym set up to allow appropriate distancing by staggering or moving gym equipment to other areas of the Training Ground, for example some Clubs have utilised outdoor marquees.
- Restaurants and cafeterias at the Training Ground are to be closed. Clubs may open kitchens (adhering to social distancing requirements) to provide takeaway food for Players to eat away from the Training Ground. This food should be left at designated collection point upon exit from the Training Ground.
- Team Meetings in poorly ventilated rooms must be avoided. Alternatives must be considered with a preference for virtual meetings. Any congregation of individuals inside should be avoided, however where this is not possible to mitigate risk they should take place in a suitably ventilated appropriately sized room where social distancing of 2 metres plus can easily be achieved. All individuals present must wear facial coverings, except those needing to speak during a meeting.
- Air conditioning should not be used for indoor areas unless it uses a fresh air supply.

In relation to travel to away matches Clubs are also reminded of the latest guidance:

- We strongly advise the use of multiple coaches to travel to away games during this period to ensure suitable social distancing can be followed and the level of risk of transmission reduced.
- When using coaches, Clubs should produce a seating plan that ensures individuals are not sat opposite each other and that social distancing can be maintained.
- Individuals should remain in their allocated seat throughout the duration of the journey and should not move around the coach.
- Face coverings must be worn at all times by all people.
- Air conditioning should be switched off unless it has a fresh air supply.
- Coach drivers should be socially distanced from all travellers, ideally behind a Perspex screen and should wear a face covering at all times. Clubs should ensure that coach drivers are free from symptoms ahead of departure.
- Where multiple coaches cannot be provided Clubs should consider encouraging players and staff to travel to the venue individually by car.



- Car sharing should be avoided in any instance.
- Clubs should fully risk assess the use of hotels during this period. Where an overnight stay is necessary:
- Room Sharing should be avoided where possible.
- Hotel usage should be exclusive to teams where possible or managed in a manner that does not pose a risk of cross-over or contact with the public.
- Face Coverings should be worn at all times in communal areas.
- Any dining should comply with Government and EFL guidelines

Should you have any questions in relation to any of the above information please contact the Club Relationships team clubrelationships@efl.com

Your continued support is appreciated.

Kind regards

Andrea Brown
Head of Football Services
EFL