

The Football Association



Covid-19: Guidance on recognising the NHS and Key Workers on Playing Kit etc updated following direction from the Department of Health and Social Care

Background

The Association previously issued guidance on what may appear on playing kit to recognise the work of the NHS and key workers. The guidance has been updated following direction received from the Department of Health and Social Care ('the Department') on the use of the NHS logo, branding and initials.

The Department has advised that the letters 'NHS' and the NHS logo are both trademarks owned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and therefore they cannot be used without permission from the Department. Due to the high levels of trust the NHS identity evokes from patients, the public and NHS staff, use of the NHS identity is strictly controlled and it cannot be used by non-NHS organisations.

The Covid-19 outbreak and the groundswell of support for the NHS and its staff has prompted many people to want to use the NHS identity in support of the NHS, including on football kits. The Department introduced a policy by which in certain instances, it may be able to grant a temporary licence for use of the NHS identity until 31 August 2020, retrospectively if required. This would only allow use of the letters 'NHS' and not the NHS logo unless in extreme circumstances, and the company, individuals or products using the NHS identity must uphold the ethos of the NHS.

The Association is supportive of initiatives to recognise the work and sacrifice of the NHS and key workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this respect The Association has produced this Guidance to assist stakeholders as to what may be included on the playing kit and outer clothing to be worn by teams during the period of a match until the end of the 2020/21 season.

The Association's Kit and Advertising Regulations¹ and IFAB Laws of the Game² address what may be included on a team's playing kit and outer clothing worn in the Technical Area (or equivalent) during the period of a match. The Regulations and Laws apply at all levels of the game. This Guidance is based on the Regulations and Laws.

Criteria for use

The following criteria is to be used by a Club at all levels of the game when recognising support for the NHS and key workers on playing kit and outer clothing used during the period of a match to the end of season 2020/21 other than as set out below. All forms of message, logo or emblem must meet the requirements and spirit of the Regulations and Laws of the Game.

The following is to be followed for a single match or series of matches:

¹ Available from <http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook>

² Available from <https://www.theifab.com>

- A simple message, recognised logo or emblem (or combination thereof) may during the period of a match appear as a single area of no more than 100cmsq anywhere on a shirt and on any outer clothing worn in the Technical Area in addition to the club crest and any sponsorship. Alternatively such a message, logo or emblem may during the period of a match appear on a shirt and any outer clothing worn in the Technical Area in the space reserved for the main club sponsor to a maximum total area of 250cmsq. It is the Club's responsibility to obtain the consent of the owner of a motif or emblem for its use (Note: Affiliated Association or Competition requirements may also apply);
- The Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed that the NHS logo, initials and branding is not permitted to appear on any item of playing kit or outer wear after 31 August 2020 at any level of the game at any time;
- However, as a concession the Department has agreed that a simple message of "Thank You NHS" may appear on the shirts of teams that play at grassroots level (ie below the National League Systems (male and female)) for season 2020/21 if the shirt is procured before 31 August 2020;
- A Competition may require its permission for a message, logo or emblem to be used during the course of a match to be played in its Competition;
- A Competition led initiative for all its member clubs subject to that initiative meeting this Guidance, the Regulations and Laws of the Game.

The following is not permitted

- The use of hashtags (#);
- Political, religious, personal or offensive messages, slogans or emblems;
- the use of NHS logo, branding or initials after 31 August 2020, other than at grassroots level as stated above.

The Association will apply this Guidance, FA Rules and Regulations and the Laws at its sole discretion. If further guidance is required, please contact sanctioning@thefa.com

Notes:

- (i) If a Club has made arrangements locally with a NHS provider for the use of NHS logos, branding or initials then the Club should contact the NHS provider.
- (ii) The Department of Health and Social Care has also stated that the use of the NHS logo, branding and initials is not permitted to appear in or around stadia after 31 August 2020 without having obtained its prior written consent.

Approved by The FA Football Regulatory Authority on 21 August 2020