

Nightclub & Venue Reopening Strategy

The case for a science-based, risk-assessed return to a Covid-secure opening of nightclubs and venues

Executive Summary

The Institute of Occupational Medicine have produced an independent, objective report which demonstrates that the risk of Covid transmission can be reduced to the lowest practicable level through a competent risk assessment based on a hierarchy of control, and then strictly implementing the mitigation measures arising from the assessment. The precise measures may vary from sector to sector, but the discipline remains the same. On that basis, there is no reason why the nightclub sector cannot be permitted to re-open with safe measures in place. Those measures need specifically to respond to fears around proximity and density,

but the size of nightclubs and their ability to space customers appropriately will go a long way to mitigating concerns, along with appropriate management of customers whilst entering, exiting and being on the premises. Bearing in mind the behaviour we are witnessing in unregulated environments such as beaches, parks and raves, there is a strong argument to permit clubs to re-open albeit under strict controls flowing from government guidance and individual risk assessments informed by experience from other sectors. With many operators now verging on insolvency, it is time now for the government to recognise the need for a new approach.



Overview

The Covid-19 virus has caused a global pandemic resulting in social and economic lockdowns across the world. The current lockdown in the UK began on 20th March 2020 and to this date sections of the economy are still subject to restrictions from trading. The late-night sector has been particularly hard hit being one of the first sectors closed and yet still has no roadmap of opening due to the risks associated with dancing and loud music as these have been identified as factors

that without mitigation may increase the risk of transmission.

A group of entertainment and event providers and operators together with the Night Time Industries Association (NTIA) have commissioned the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) to produce the report appended which examines the known science behind the transmission of the virus and the approach of the UK government to mitigating such transmission risk.

Transmission

The IOM report states that best scientific opinion is that transmission of the virus is via three routes, namely;

1. Close personal contact with someone who has the virus (whether asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic or symptomatic)
2. Surface contact transmission via contaminated surfaces
3. Emerging evidence of airborne transmission in aerosol form in 'poorly ventilated, crowded environments' where exposure is 'relatively long'

Mitigation approach

Advice to the UK government from SAGE is that prevention and mitigation measures should be selected using a 'hierarchy of control' approach and that measures are in place to cover all transmission routes. SAGE advocates the use of a 'bow-tie' model to design mitigating controls looking at prevention barriers that reduce the risk of exposure taking place and then mitigation barriers that mitigate consequences following any such exposure that is not fully prevented. Possible interaction points between customers and other

customers, staff and other staff and customers and staff should be analysed, risk assessed and then prevention barriers designed using barriers under the heading of elimination, substitution, engineering, administration and PPE. In the context of each of these possible transmission risks the consequences of each transmission method should be reviewed and further barriers put in place to reduce the risk of exposure to each transmission method in each possible contact or interaction.

Summary

We believe that there is a risk assessed return available for clubs and venues, backed by current science and within government guidelines. Furthermore, we believe there is not a case to single out such venues for prolonged closure if these risk assessments and protocols are in place. Whilst there are some areas of increased risks over other sectors there are many real benefits that such businesses have

over other sectors, particularly as all our venues have security to give 100% cover of matters such as temperature checks, track and trace, and keeping customer behaviour in check. This document, together with the full OEM report in the appendix, shows there is a way forward that is at least no worse than many of those that have been afforded an opening already, and in many cases is actually better.

How do nightclubs and venues operate?

An entertainment venue/nightclub that is open from the evening until early morning, having facilities such as a bar and disco or other entertainment.

1. Premises Licensing Conditions for many venues nationally require each patron entering the premises to be entered into an ID Scan system. Where this is not present other electronic track and trace measures are/will be in place.
2. Nightclubs/Venues have expertise in Queue management – With effective Transport and Dispersal policies which are administered nightly and form part of a venues operating plan.
3. Staff and Management Training already a huge part of the cyclical training regime of a venue operation.
4. Nightclubs are now a more controlled environment, people act appropriately, dress up, and want to engage in civil activities.



PHOTO CREDIT: ZAC BROMELL (UNSPLASH)

PHOTO CREDIT: NICK FEWINGS (UNSPLASH)

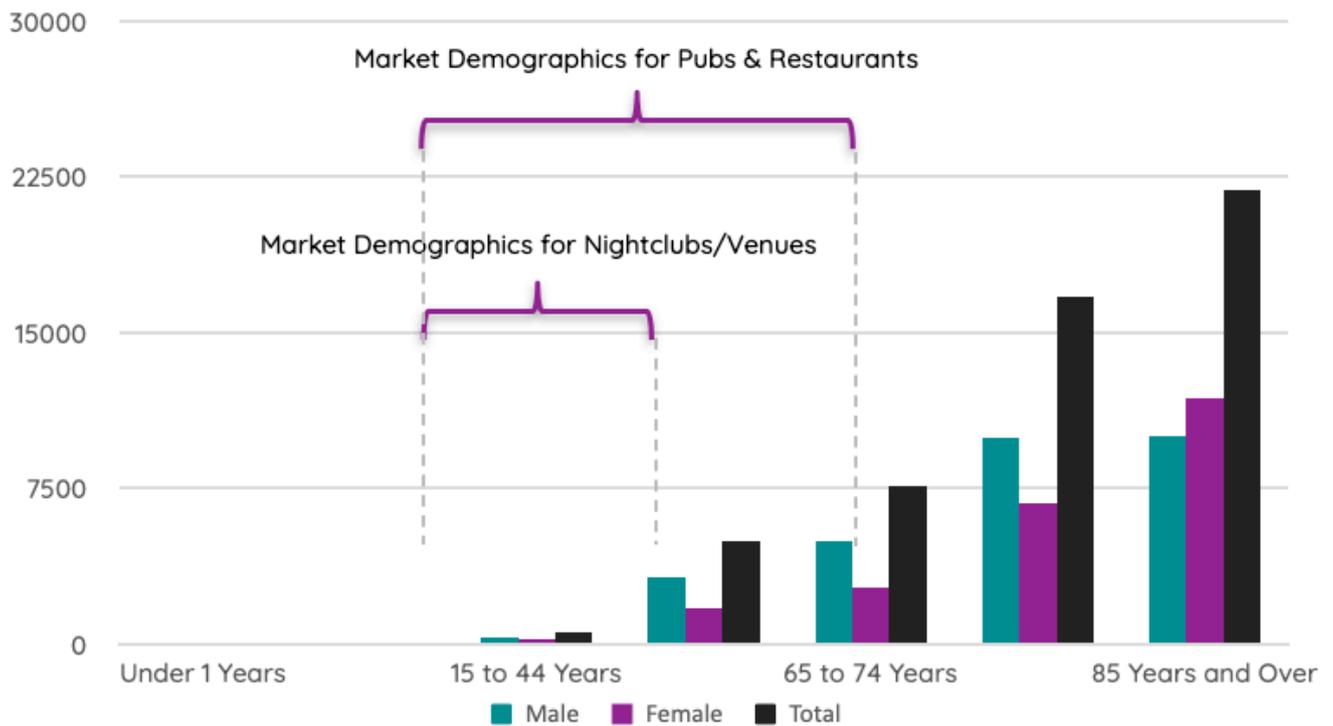


5. Hygiene and cleaning regimes are already a huge part of the operational requirements within a venue in terms of Health and Safety and standards.
6. Trained Licensed Security Operatives are a prerequisite of a nightclub, evaluating resource based on effective Risk Management on site.
7. Strict guidelines in terms of Fire Risk Assessments are adhered to in terms of a venues holding capacity and effective systems are in place to manage risk as part of the operation.
8. Nightclubs/venues through operating efficiency have already adopted contactless payment methods within many operations.
9. Venues have effective air handling systems with an average air change of over 15 times per hour and many have open air space.
10. Performances are housed within DJ Consoles or on stages with no public access, with isolated entertainment teams working together over set time periods.

What are the demographics?

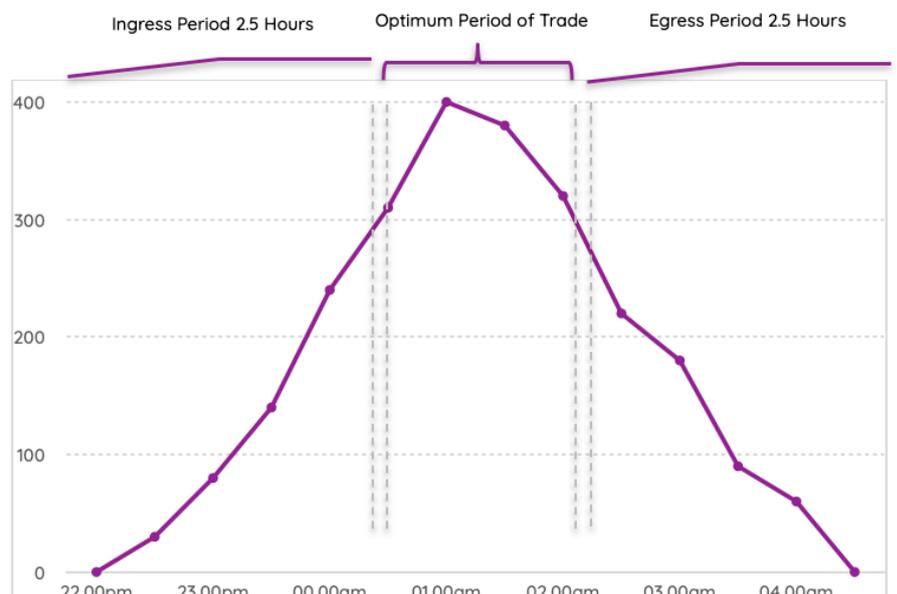
The core market for clubs and venues are amongst the lowest at risk sector in the hospitality sector. Pubs, Bars and Restaurants are currently open and have a broader market in terms of age groups comparative to Nightclubs. The risk of them passing on the virus can be mitigated with a further programme of measures, education, cleaning regimes and messaging.

ONS Deaths in England/Wales involving Covid-19 registered up to 31st July 2020 by Age & Sex



People tend to turn up for an optimum period that is typically 2 hours and as such the capacity at any one time is well within the total capacity of a venue. It is envisaged that clubs could also additionally offer a reduced total capacity opening to 75% of the existing licensed capacity. Due to their size this would allow for Social Distancing within a venue and a supervised dancefloor to adhere to the 1m plus policy.

Example: Nightclub / Venue Admissions Ingress & Egress





Operational comparatives

Mitigation / Control measure	Retail	Bars, Pubs, Restaurants	Households	Illegal raves and parties	Nightclubs/late night venues
Site-specific risk assessment	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Regulated social-distancing measures	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Cleaning regimes enforced	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Appropriate use of PPE required	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Data collection for NHS track and trace	✗	*some	✗	✗	✓
Requirement for effective communication of risk to users	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Regimes for sanitary facilities	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
High quality and substantial fresh-air ventilation capability	*some	*some	✗	✓	✓
Regulation of persons attending through use of security or other entry protocols	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

How can nightclubs and venues mitigate risk?

As indicated on the previous slide, nightclubs are able to provide the same barriers and mitigations to risk that both the retail sector and other elements of the hospitality sector can provide. In addition there are other sector specific measures that we can easily operate to ensure the safety of our sector is at least on par with others who are allowed to trade.

SAGE Bow-tie	Barriers to transmission	Mitigation of exposure
Elimination	Use of thermal monitoring of guests can be easily introduced as part of customer entry procedures that are already in place	Effective data collection is the norm for clubs and late-night venues who were used to collecting this for marketing purposes and are very adept and doing so.
Substitution	Able to operate all the same protocols as other permitted industries and sectors	Able to operate all the same protocols as other permitted industries and sectors
Engineering	Able to operate all the same protocols as other permitted industries and sectors	Mechanical ventilation units in place and typically designed to deliver 12-25 air changes per hour of fresh air with no recirculation. This compares with 8-12 in well-ventilated retail environments and pubs/restaurants and much lower in community pubs with aged infrastructure and buildings.
Administration	Numbers of occupants on dancefloors can be regulated and managed using existing security staff and protocols to ensure distancing remains possible. Overall capacity restriction to 75% of legal building occupancy based on regulations will ensure distancing is possible throughout the venue.	Able to operate all the same protocols as other permitted industries and sectors.
PPE	Use of face-coverings on the dancefloor can be implemented and enforced through existing security staff and protocols. Similar enforcement activities are already existing and usual in our environments.	Able to operate all the same protocols as other permitted industries and sectors