

Independent SAGE Signs and “Scores on the Doors”: Communicating about Ventilation

Update March 15th 2022

On 8th October 2021, Independent SAGE published a proposal for a simple [messaging scheme](#) designed to convey, in a non-technical and factual way, the technical results of mechanical and natural (‘fresh air’) ventilation assessments of indoor rooms and spaces in public buildings of all types. Explanations of the purpose, value, and evidence for such a scheme were articulated in that document. Following its publication, and feedback following an IndieSAGE ‘Friday briefing’, we set up a working group comprising members from Independent SAGE, academia and industryⁱ. A month later, on 5th November 2021, the UK government launched a new campaign (“[Stop COVID-19 hanging around](#)”) to demonstrate ‘the importance of simple ventilation techniques’ (see also similar [information campaigns in France](#)). It was also reported on 23rd November 2021 that the Northern Ireland executive asked its Covid taskforce to “look at the potential of setting up a [scores-on-the-doors type system](#) to rate businesses on their compliance with rules and mitigations.”

The original goals of the IndieSAGE ‘proof of concept’ scheme were pragmatic and about awareness-raising for the short, medium, and longer term: a) encourage the public and organizations to seek and request information about ventilation, and know what to ask, and b) give everyone access to simple information about spaces, buildings, and rooms so that they can make informed decisions about whether to enter. Ideally, SotD will evolve into a scheme (independent of IndieSAGE), perhaps with a website similar to the AA’s ‘[Covid Confident](#)’ scheme or [AccessAble’s](#) website that provides accessibility information about venues of all kinds. Since December 2021, we have been working with early adopters and evolved a process leading to signage, currently being piloted. The three signage options, illustrated overleaf with [Noun Project](#) icons, are new (simplified) versions of our original ‘energy labelling’ / traffic light / ‘scores on the doors’ scheme:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Option 1 | Display ‘ventilation/air aware’ information only (e.g., convey that the room is mechanically ventilated, HEPA filtered, or CO ₂ monitored, with brief technical data (e.g., “10L/sec/person”, akin to “XYZ kWh” on energy rating labels) |
| Option 2 | Display ‘ventilation/air aware’ information plus traffic-light/colour-coded behavioural mitigations (e.g., the room is HEPA-filtered AND occupants should wear a facemask) |
| Option 3 | Display ‘ventilation/air aware’ plus monochrome behavioural mitigations (e.g., the room is HEPA-filtered AND occupants should wear a facemask) |

To keep signage uncluttered, and similar to energy rating labels for familiarity, a QR code links to all underpinning information relevant to the scheme which is hosted on the adopting organization’s website (e.g., room/space data, reporting tool, link to Independent SAGE documents, etc.). The QR code also links to a disclaimer about the signage – that it “tells you how this room is ventilated. The sign does not tell you about safety.” The scheme is currently being piloted by early adopters using a short anonymous online evaluation questionnaire.

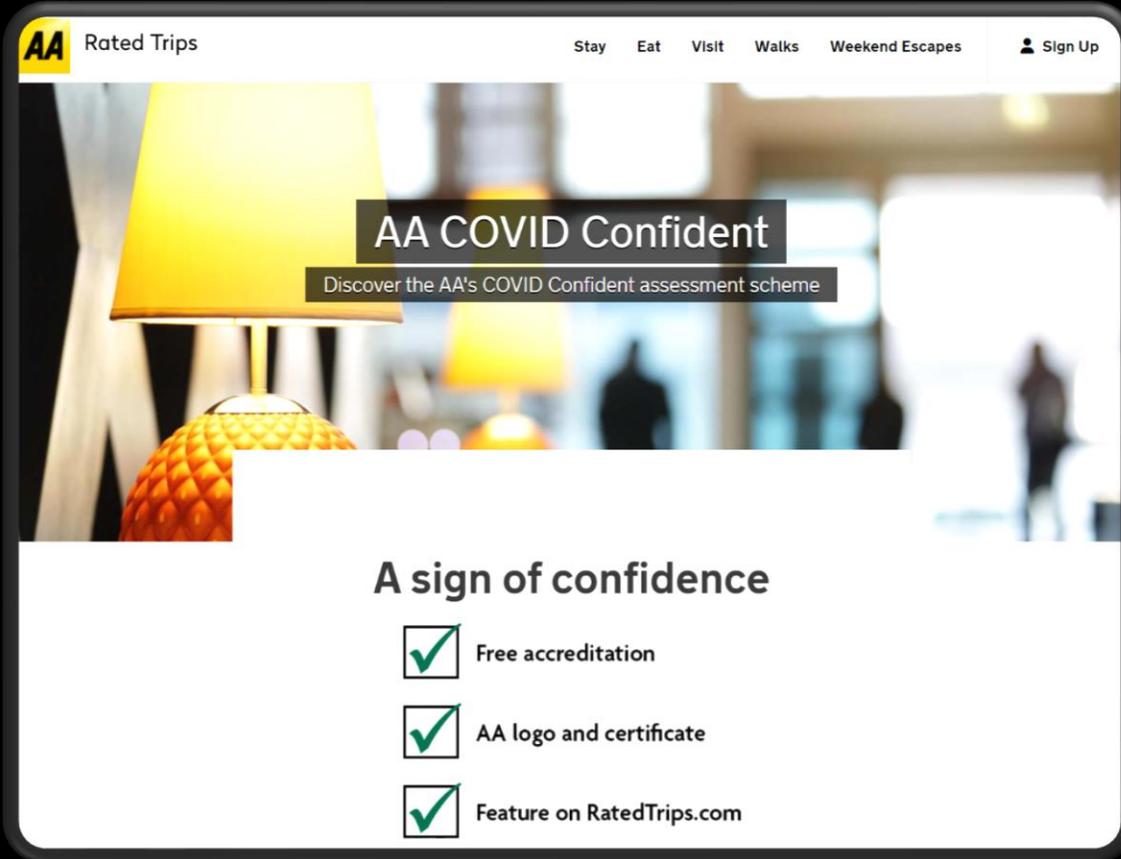
The scheme is currently being piloted alongside an evaluation framework in a small number of organizations in England. We also presented the SotD process to the Scottish Government in December 2021. As part of the commitment articulated in [Scotland’s COVID-19 Strategic Framework February 2022 Update](#) to “work with partners to develop, by the end of April, a pilot scheme that encourages those who manage buildings and settings, in the private and public sector, to display by way of signage the protective measures they have in place”, we will begin piloting the scheme with the Scottish Government in spring.

ⁱ We are grateful for the expert input of Tracy Edwards (Public and Commercial Services Union), Dr Eilir Hughes (GP, and [freshair.wales](#)), Dr Pamela Karantonis (Goldsmiths University of London), Janet Newsham (Hazards Campaign), Dr Adam Squires (University of Bath), and Dr Simon Williams (Swansea University).

Imagine if signage about ventilation and air was presented at the door of any room, building, or space...



... or if you could check the ventilation and air provision online:



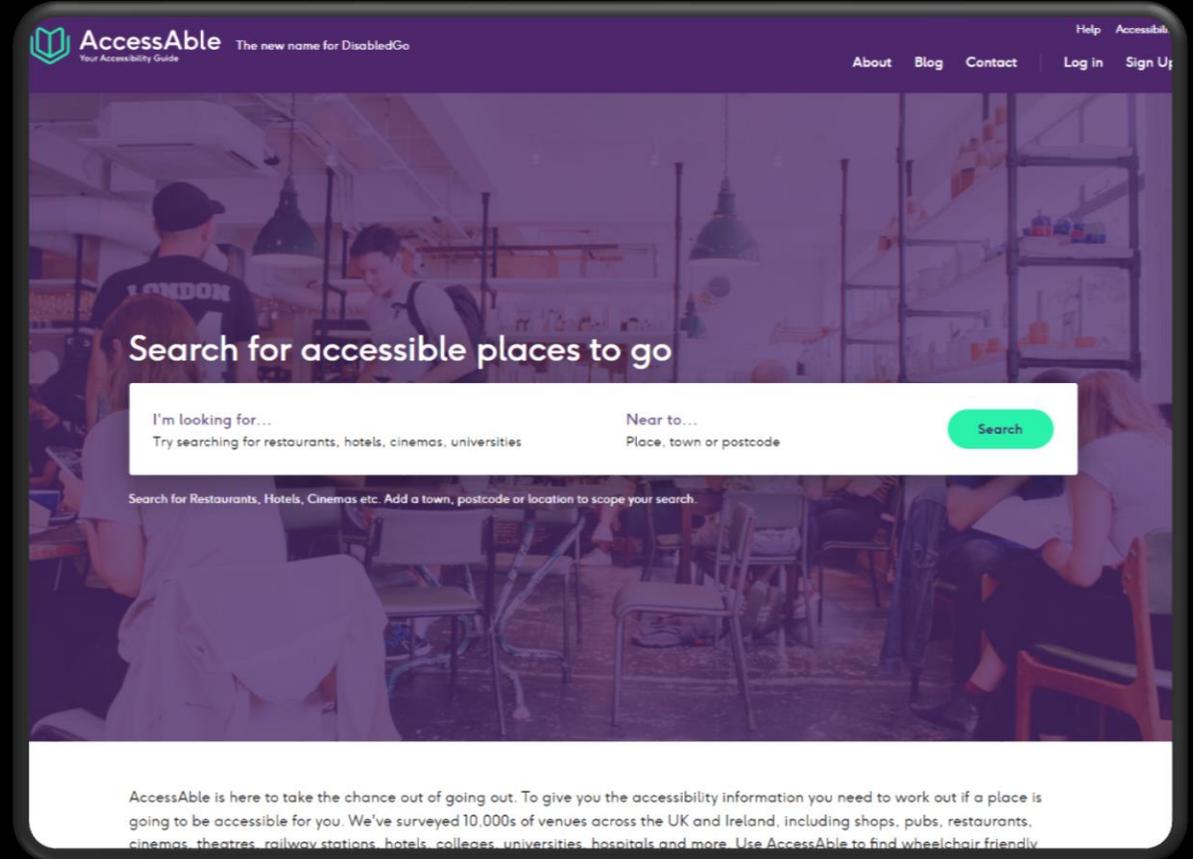
AA Rated Trips Stay Eat Visit Walks Weekend Escapes Sign Up

AA COVID Confident

Discover the AA's COVID Confident assessment scheme

A sign of confidence

- ✓ Free accreditation
- ✓ AA logo and certificate
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AccessAble The new name for DisabledGo Your Accessibility Guide Help Accessibility

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I'm looking for... Try searching for restaurants, hotels, cinemas, universities

Near to... Place, town or postcode

Search

Search for Restaurants, Hotels, Cinemas etc. Add a town, postcode or location to scope your search.

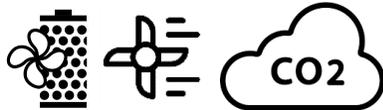
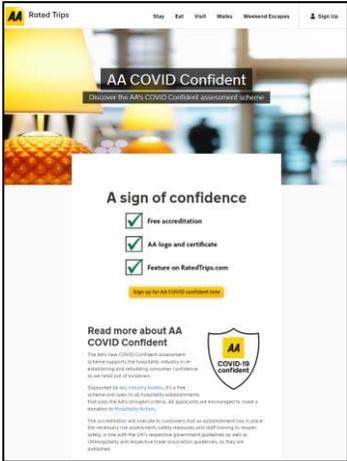
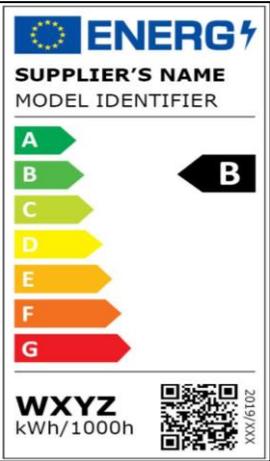
AccessAble is here to take the chance out of going out. To give you the accessibility information you need to work out if a place is going to be accessible for you. We've surveyed 10,000s of venues across the UK and Ireland, including shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, railway stations, hotels, colleges, universities, hospitals and more. Use AccessAble to find wheelchair friendly...

Feature on RatedTrips.com

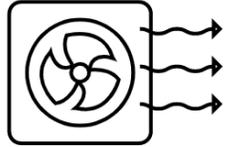
AA logo and certificate

Free accreditation

This proposed scheme trades off existing visual systems and icons for presenting technical information, such as energy or sunscreen labelling and icons.



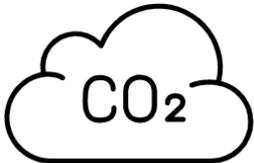
The 'Signs on the Doors' Icons



The room is mechanically ventilated



The room can be naturally ventilated



The room is CO₂ monitored



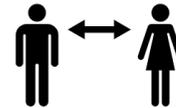
The room is HEPA air filtered



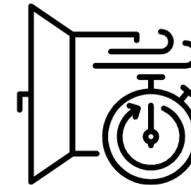
The room has no ventilation or methods of cleaning the air



Wear a facemask (ideally FFP2/N95)



Practice physical distancing



Open windows and/or doors



Wash hands



Limit time

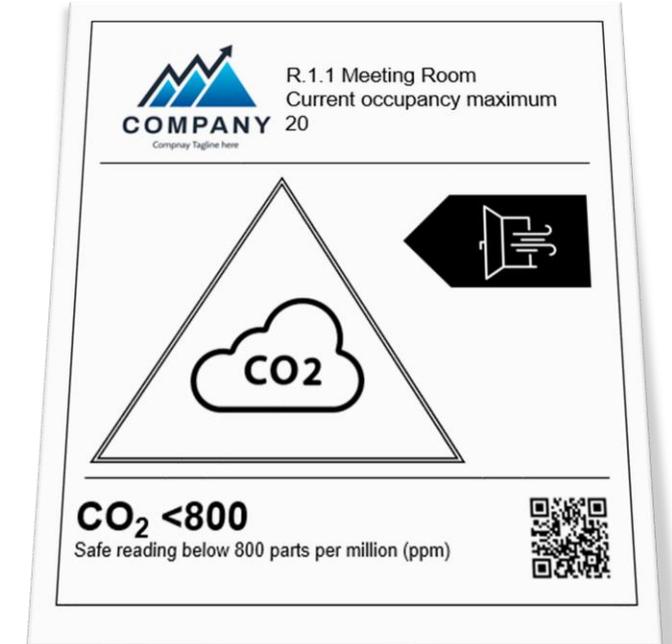
The three types of 'Sign on the Door'



The sign presents 'ventilation/air aware' information only (e.g., convey that the room is mechanically ventilated, or CO₂ monitored)



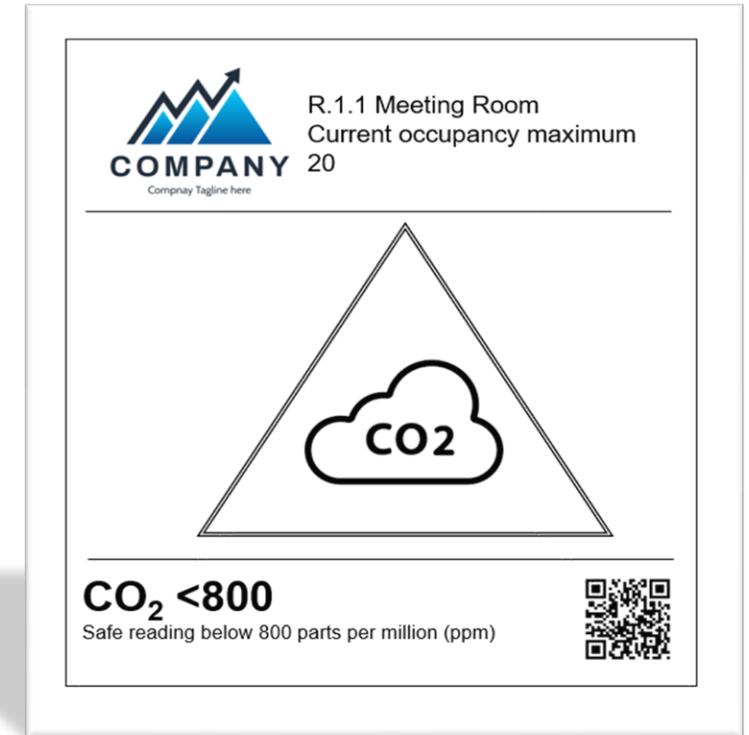
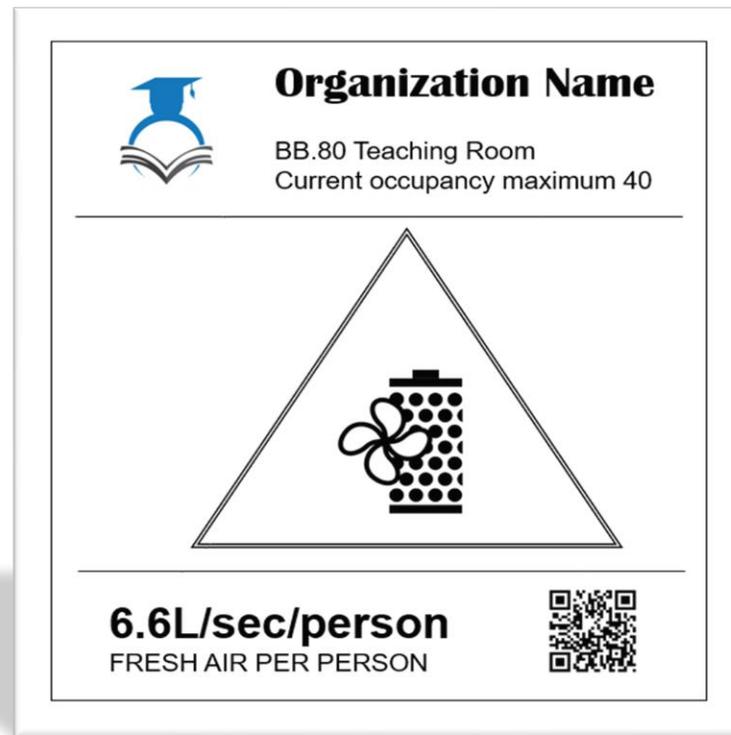
The sign presents 'ventilation/air aware' plus **traffic-light/colour-coded behavioural mitigations** (e.g., the room is HEPA-filtered AND occupants should wear a facemask)



The sign presents 'ventilation/air aware' plus monochrome behavioural mitigations (e.g., the room is HEPA-filtered AND occupants should wear a facemask)

SotD Option 1

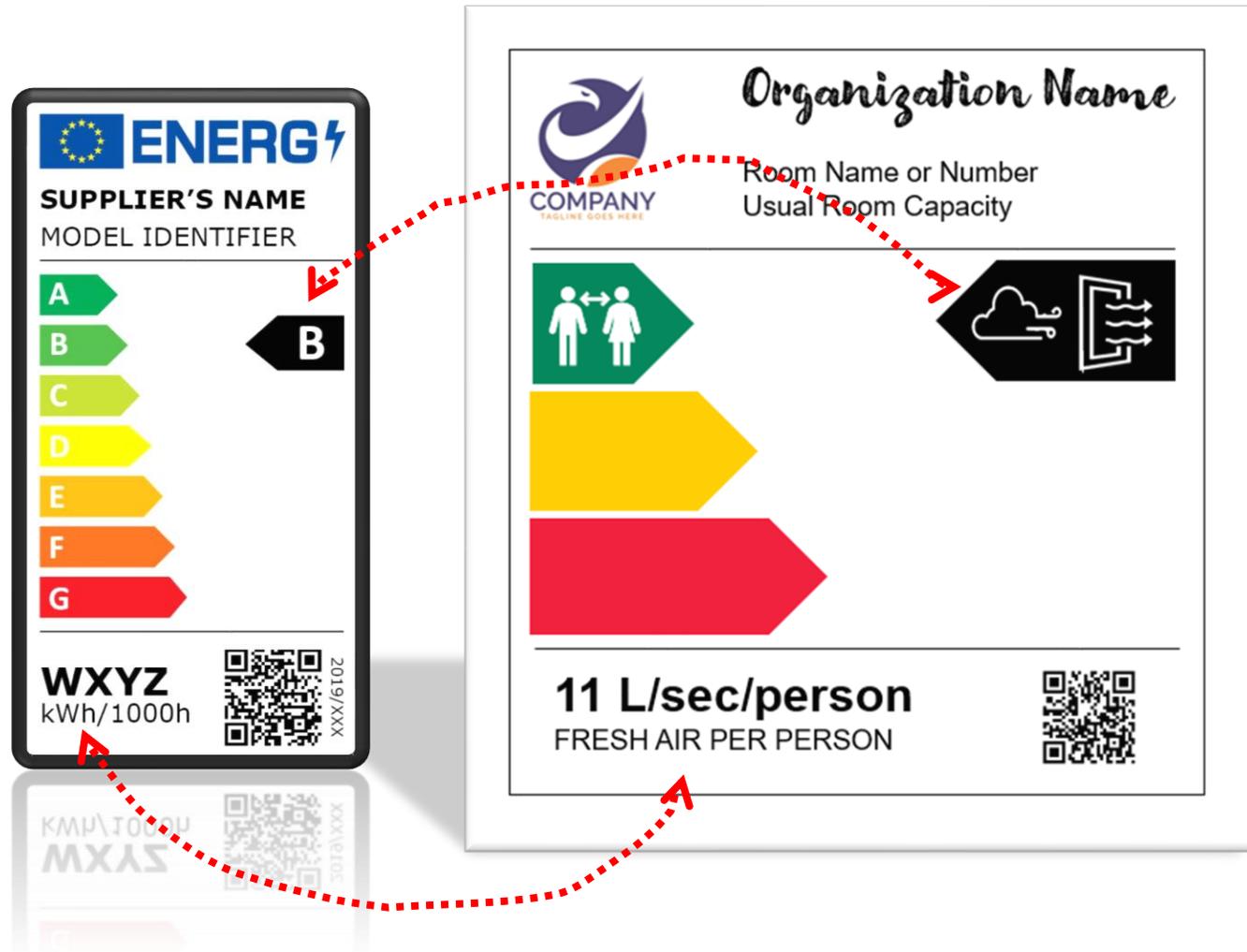
“Ventilation/Air Aware” designed to convey ventilation/air information only as a monochrome scheme



A QR code links to information relevant to the scheme on the adopting organization’s website (e.g., room/space data, reporting tool, link to Independent SAGE documents, the online questionnaire, etc.). The QR code also links to a disclaimer: This sign tells you how this room is ventilated. The sign does not tell you about safety.”

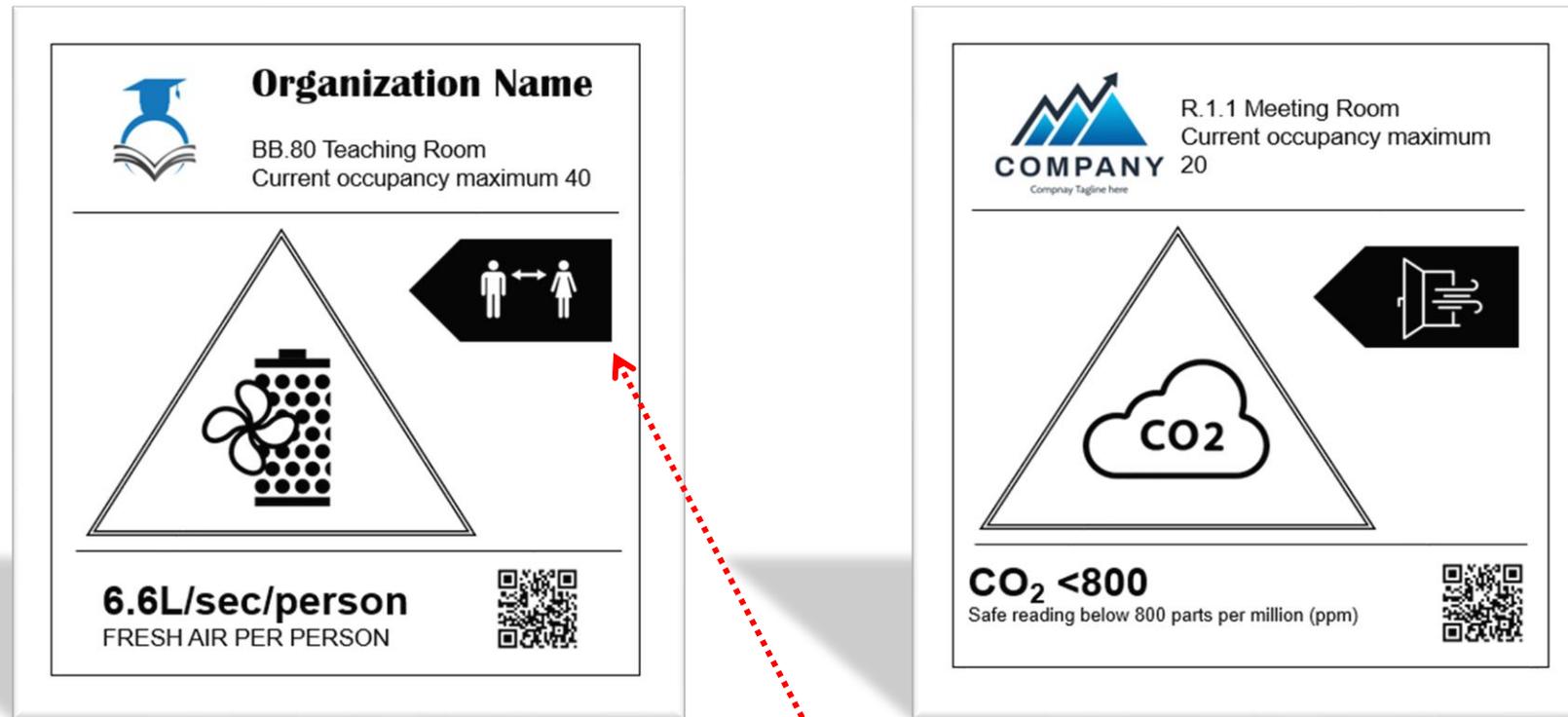
SotD Option 2

“Ventilation/Air Aware” designed to convey ventilation/air information plus behavioural mitigations in a colour-coded traffic light scheme



SotD Option 3

“Ventilation/Air Aware” designed to convey ventilation/air information plus behavioural mitigations in a monochrome scheme



To avoid confusion between static and dynamic signage (e.g., between a CO₂ monitor that itself uses traffic light colours and colour-coded room signage) the behavioural mitigations are included in monochrome.

We are testing a way of providing information about the ventilation in our rooms and spaces. We would be very grateful if you would let us know how well it is working by answering the questions below. It will only take a couple of minutes and it is important to get your experience whether or not you can recall having seen any signs.

Thank you very much for your help.

1. What do you think about the idea of having simple signage just outside or inside teaching rooms to let people know about how well ventilated they are?
It's a good idea, It's a bad idea, Not sure

2. When you came into this room on this occasion, did you notice any signage about how well ventilated this room is?
Yes, No, Not sure

If Yes:

1. Was it clear to you what it meant in terms of how safe it is for you to use the room?
Yes, No, Not sure

2. What did you take it to mean?
[-----]

3. Did you feel that the information was trustworthy?
Yes, No, Not sure

4. Did it alter your confidence about using this room safely?
Increased it, Decreased it, No change, Not sure

5. If you have any views about how the signage could be improved, or have other comments, please write these in the space provided.
[-----]

3. Which of these best describes your main role in relation to [organisation]?
Academic staff, Student, Admin, Professional services, Security, Cleaning, Visitor, Other (please specify)

4. Would you say you are 'clinically vulnerable' in the sense being used to identify people at higher risk of illness from Covid-19?
Yes, No, Not sure

5. Do you live with someone who is 'clinically vulnerable' in the sense being used to identify people at higher risk illness from Covid-19?
Yes, No, Not sure

Example evaluation questionnaire