

Guidance for Managers and Staff – Questions and Answers

9 November 2020

1. What does the current lockdown period from 5 November to 2 December mean for us all working in the University?

There are some differences between this lockdown and the first one. For instance, schools, colleges and universities will stay open and you can meet one person from another household outdoors as long as you keep two metres apart. The New National Restrictions (from 5 November) indicate that public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work. This means that we will continue to work together in our academic and professional services roles supporting our students and staff. We don't know yet whether at the end of this four-week period, the Government will look to return to the regional tiered restrictions, or extend the period further.

2. How does this affect me?

Over the past few weeks, we have seen cases of coronavirus increasing and therefore it is more important than ever that we make every effort now to follow University guidance and keep our number of contacts as low as possible to reduce the risk of catching or spreading the virus within our community. Please discuss with your manager any concerns you might have relating to your role requirements, for example, working safely in supporting students/staff. Working arrangements will be implemented where appropriate to minimise risk which may require a review and updating of existing risk assessments.

For some post holders, working from home during this period of lockdown will be possible, whereas other post holders will be required to work on campus in student/staff front-facing roles or for operating reasons. Heads and Directors will do what they can to ensure they manage working arrangements in line with COVID-19 safe working practices, including where staff are required to work on campus, or where they can work from home if this is possible due to the nature of role requirements, or to do both, for example on a rota basis. Your manager will support you as far as possible but it won't always be possible to provide a consistent approach in each department as our roles and responsibilities differ.

3. How can I support my mental health and wellbeing?

Protecting students' mental health and wellbeing must remain a priority, but we recognise that many staff are also facing additional mental health challenges, due to the disruption to working practices and uncertainty caused by COVID-19. The resilience of all staff has been challenged by the current situation and the implications of this will vary from employee to employee. How we work can impact on mental health, particularly where there is a level of unease and uncertainty such as now where there are factors to consider, including the impact of lockdown or ongoing restrictions. Some colleagues will understandably be fearful about contracting the virus, whilst others will also be anxious about family and friends.

Whilst we can offer professional development opportunities to support mental health and wellbeing for those who would like to participate, others may not feel comfortable in speaking up about poor mental health and would rather have a confidential discussion.

You can seek personal support via the following:

- Chichester Wellbeing are offering a 30-minute Wellbeing one-to-one telephone call for staff who wish to have a confidential discussion on Thursday 12 and Friday 13 November.
- Staff can arrange to have a confidential discussion with an external Counsellor by contacting E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk, or H.Girling@chi.ac.uk, or K.Botto@chi.ac.uk, or C.Meneely@chi.ac.uk, who will provide contact details. You can also arrange a time to discuss any concerns you might have with colleagues in HR.
- A further session on 'Managing Coronavirus Anxiety' will be facilitated by West Sussex MIND on Tuesday 8 December, 9.30am to 12 noon. You are very welcome to attend this virtual session.
- A Mindfulness webinar is being facilitated by Chichester Wellbeing via MS Teams on 24 November between 10.00am and 11.00am.
- Chichester Wellbeing Services are supporting a session on Stress Awareness on 9 December 2020, 10.00-11.00 via MS Teams.

You can book a space on an event or an appointment to have a one-to-one telephone discussion with Chichester Wellbeing by contacting Natasha Loveday N.Loveday@chi.ac.uk or telephone 01243 816248.

Additional resources for staff relating to mental health and wellbeing are available via our Learning Resources Professional Development pages [on the Staff Development website](#).

4. I am worried about the new National Restrictions as I am over 60

The Government guidance on the New National Restrictions (from 5 November) indicate that if you are over 60 or clinically vulnerable, you should be especially careful to follow the rules ensuring you are social distancing. Please raise with your manager any particular concerns you may have. A one-to-one individual COVID-19 risk assessment can be arranged in order to assess any increased risks. As with all other staff, you should ensure you are following guidelines and working safely, in line with departmental/University requirements. It goes without saying that you should continue to wash your hands carefully and more frequently than usual and maintain thorough cleaning of frequently touched areas in your home and/or workspace.

5. I have received notification that I am considered clinically extremely vulnerable. What should I do?

If you have received notification in writing from the Minister of Health at the Department of Health and Social Care, or the NHS, confirming that you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you will likely have to take additional precautions. Although advice and not the law, you may be advised to follow extra precautionary shielding measures to keep yourself safe, such as working from home if you are able to. Please raise with your manager if you have received a notification to ensure any practical implications can be discussed, which may include working through an individual risk assessment.

Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 can [be found on the gov.uk website](#).

This guidance applies to clinically extremely vulnerable individuals only. Others living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend work if they are not able to work from home, in line with the wider rules set out in the new [national restrictions from 5 November](#).

6. Will furlough be implemented again?

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), introduced by the Government earlier this year, applied to a small number of professional service roles in the University. The Government has announced that the CJRS, which enables employers to place staff on furlough leave, is to be extended until early 2021, with the Job Support Scheme (JSS) that was to replace the CJRS, being delayed. As the University remains open during the lockdown period in line with government guidance, there are no plans to utilise the CJRS currently.

7. Will COVID-19 Risk assessments be reviewed as a result of the second lockdown?

All previously raised COVID-19 departmental risk assessments will be reviewed as required to ensure they remain fit for purpose. During the current lockdown period (5 November to 2 December), Heads and Directors will make any changes required to risk assessments, returning these to Kevin Hickman, Health and Safety Manager, by 11 November 2020. If you have any questions about your departmental risk assessment, please discuss with your manager as a first step, or for further advice contact K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk.

8. What is the process to be followed if I have symptoms of COVID-19?

If anyone in the University community becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of or change in their normal sense of taste or smell, they [must stay at home and follow the government guidelines](#).

It is essential you report the outcomes of your test results so that we can monitor and track latest COVID-19 cases.

Staff should follow the steps outlined in this flow chart:

[Self-Isolation Flowchart for Staff](#)

Students should follow the steps outlined in this flow chart:

[Self-Isolation Flowchart for Students](#)

Please ensure students email covidreportsupport@chi.ac.uk with test results.

Please let your manager and your HR lead contact know if you are isolating or waiting on the outcome of a test result, including your test status (i.e. positive or negative). Please confirm the date of your test and when you started to isolate, including an indication of your likely return date. If your test result is positive, you will be asked who you have had close contact with on campus, e.g. students or staff. It is very likely NHS Test and Trace will discuss this with you, too.

9. A reminder on wearing face coverings

We have previously advised that face coverings, i.e. face masks, should be worn as an additional risk mitigation measure by students, staff and visitors. Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings, and we expect staff and students to be sensitive to those needs. [Guidance on face coverings is available on the Government website](#) (updated 4 November 2020).

10. Getting and reporting a test result

You should isolate and get a test if you have symptoms. You must [self-isolate](#) and wait for your test result. You must also self-isolate if you cannot get a test.

If you have been isolating away from work but you have not tested positive for COVID-19, you will not be recorded as having tested positive for COVID-19. Please be aware that if you indicate you have had COVID-19 when you have not tested positive, this may cause undue stress and concern to your colleagues, especially at this time of year when colds and coughs may be prevalent. We are required to report on positive test results externally.

11. Where are the nearest testing centres to our campuses?

For staff and students at Bishop Otter Campus, the testing centre is located in the Northgate Car Park (Chichester Festival Theatre) at the bottom of College Lane.

For staff and students at Bognor Regis Campus, the testing centre is located on the Tech Park Car Park.

These are walk-to testing centres and members of the public are also able to access these facilities where they have been directed to these testing facilities. You can access these testing centres [by booking a test in the normal way you would access any testing facility](#).

If you haven't already, and your 'phone allows, you may wish to [download the NHS COVID-19 app](#) if you can to help maintain the safety of all of our staff and students.

12. I recently taught a student on campus and they have informed me that they have reported a positive test result. What should I do as I think I am a contact?

Please follow the guidance outlined in Point 13, below, outlining 'what is meant by a contact'.

If you have been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact, or within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes in total (i.e. the cumulative time within 2 metres), you should isolate and if you begin to experience symptoms, arrange to be tested. Please inform your manager and your lead HR contact of your situation.

13. A student/member of staff has been tested positive for COVID-19. What is meant by a 'contact'?

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from 2 days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from onset of symptoms (this is when they are infectious to others). For example, a contact can be:

- People who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- A person who has had face-to-face contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - Being coughed on
 - Having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - Having skin-to-skin physical contact
 - Being within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - Being within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes in total (i.e. the cumulative time within 2 metres).

[Further information on what constitutes a contact is contained on this Government website.](#)

14. I have tested positive and I am currently isolating and recovering at home. I am now feeling much better. Do I have to be tested again to ensure I am now negative before returning to work?

There is no current requirement for you to be re-tested for a negative result once you are recovered and you have completed your isolation period. There may be reasons why having a further test to ensure you are negative will be required, for example, if you are living with someone who is clinically vulnerable, pregnant or as advised by your GP/medical professional.

15. What is the University's Covid-19 Pledge?

We all have a critical role to play in reducing the spread of COVID-19. You can find the [University's COVID-19 Pledge](#) on the Coronavirus page under 'Guidance for Managers and Staff'.

16. Where can I find a copy of the University's COVID-19 Operating Procedure?

The [University's Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for the management of COVID-19 outbreaks](#) can be found on the Coronavirus page under 'Risk Assessment – Working Under Covid-19'.

17. What is the University's COVID-19 Operational Control Group (COCG)?

The COCG brings together managers, staff and the Students' Union to oversee and support a safe working and studying environment for staff and students. The COCG meets on a weekly basis.

The remit of the COCG is to:

- Review and monitor the SOP and to implement SOP outcomes
- Oversee the operation of the Covid-19 Secure Policy
- Ensure appropriate operational links to the local authority Health Protection Team, Public Health England and Head of Local Authorities.

[Further details on the COCG can be found on the intranet](#) (download required).

18. Do I have to maintain social distancing when in teaching spaces/office environments?

Yes. Please remain vigilant and ensure you are maintaining social distancing requirements from colleagues/students at all times. If you are concerned for whatever reason about being in a situation where you are unable to maintain social distancing requirements, please raise this with your manager. Please don't delay on this – it is important we ensure the safety of our students and staff. A further risk assessment of your working area/teaching space can be carried out and/or an individual risk assessment relating to your working arrangements. Please contact Health and Safety colleagues for further advice on safe working practices: K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk or J.Corrie@chi.ac.uk

Please be particularly careful during more informal interactions during teaching, especially if you feel the need to leave the marked green box in teaching spaces. If, as an example, you need to look at a student's computer screen or piece of lab equipment, please ask the student to move 2 metres away while you do so.

19. Are there mechanisms in place for Union Representatives to meet with the Vice-Chancellor's Group on COVID-19-related matters?

Our UCU and Unison Representatives play a key role in supporting members. Please support your Union representatives – as well as volunteering for these roles, they all have busy academic and professional service roles. Lead contacts for UCU are: Rosey Whorlow (Chair), Barbara Thompson, Henriette Hough (Secretary), Jorge Gutic (Health and Safety) and Andrew Wilford (Equality and Diversity). Lead contacts for Unison are: Chris Anderson, Tracy May, Roy Donaldson (Health and Safety).

- The University's Joint Consultative Group (JCG), Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, involves UCU and Unison Representatives. As well as scheduled JCG meetings, extraordinary meetings with JCG colleagues have been taking place since March. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the impact of Government and HE sector-specific guidance, receive feedback from Union members and agree actions to be taken or implemented.
- As well as the JCG, UCU and Unison colleagues are meeting every other day where possible, i.e. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, to discuss the latest COVID-19-related situation in the University for staff and students. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Simeon Keates, Chairs this meeting.

20. Are there any Data Protection measures I need to be aware of?

Yes. The University will treat as sensitive (special category) all disclosed data relating to potential cases and will process it in full compliance with data protection legislation and the University's [COVID-19 Privacy Notice](#). Please refer to 'Privacy Notice - COVID-19' in this link. This Notice makes it clear that an individual's right to privacy must be respected.