

# Guidance for Managers and Staff – Questions and Answers

Updated 6 September 2021

Early on in the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and throughout 2020 and 2021, we shared guidance in response to questions being raised by you and in response to information received from external sources such as the government, Public Health England, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association, UUK and the Office for Students.

As we begin our new academic year, we have updated again – a couple of reminder Q&A's from previous versions are included, where noted. Previous Questions and Answers remain available for you to view on the University's Coronavirus web pages and on the Human Resources page on the staff Intranet.

Please contact me, Lissie Whitaker, [E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk](mailto:E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk), if you have any questions you feel would be useful to include in our next update.

## 1. *What is the latest guidance for Universities?*

From 19 July, social distancing measures have ended in the workplace and it is no longer necessary for the government to instruct people to work from home.

There are no longer restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in higher education as a result of COVID-19. There is no requirement for social distancing or other measures within in person teaching. Universities are therefore able to shape their courses without restrictions to face-to-face provision.

In line with all other settings, Universities will continue to conduct risk assessments for their particular circumstances.

We are mindful of the concerns and anxieties some staff may have in light of the easing of restrictions. Please be respectful and considerate of each other, understanding that some people feel more comfortable with the easing of restrictions than others – we are all expected to contribute to safe working practices. The HE guidance (updated 17 August) is very clear that: *"No student should be denied education on the grounds of whether they are, or are not, wearing a face covering."*

## 2. *What does this mean for our University?*

Staff have already returned in preparation for the start of the new semester and the University will be fully operational again as we commence this new academic year. This means that students and staff will participate in in person teaching and face-to-face interactive sessions during the Autumn semester. Additional measures will remain in place as required for the safety of colleagues and students and these may vary within individual buildings and indoor spaces.

## 3. *Do I have to wear face coverings?*

While the legal requirement to wear face coverings in certain settings has been lifted from 19 July 2021, we believe this remains an effective and appropriate control measure in many indoor spaces. We encourage staff and students to continue to wear face coverings in communal indoor spaces and to respect each other and consider the safety of others.

Please continue to be considerate in your approach and respect the preferences of others, when it comes to wearing a face covering.

It is important to note that some people are [exempt from wearing face coverings](#). This can be for a wide range of reasons, including hidden disabilities. However, wearing one is a personal choice and not everyone affected by a hidden disability will choose to do so. There is no requirement for someone to carry an exemption card or badge if they do not wish to do so.

#### ***4. Do I have to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to come into work?***

Although staff do not have to be vaccinated to attend work, we strongly encourage staff and students to get vaccinated to help prevent infection and reduce hospitalisation. Whilst we recommend people to get vaccinated, it is a personal decision whether or not to receive the vaccine, whether this be for health or other reasons. We do, however, encourage the take-up of vaccination.

#### ***5. What about social distancing and other protective measures?***

Previous social distancing guidance no longer applies and there are no limits on social contact between people from different households. In line with this guidance, there will no longer be a requirement for social distancing in University teaching spaces. However, Covid-19 can still be spread through social contact and you therefore should maintain social distancing wherever possible as an additional risk mitigation. Staff and students should continue to make space for each other whilst moving around campus, passing in corridors using the maximum space available, and queuing at a reasonable distance.

Good hygiene remains an important safety measure and we should all maintain good hand hygiene, washing hands with soap and water regularly and using the hand sanitizers available across the campuses. Regular cleaning protocols are in place.

Good ventilation remains an important safety measure and staff and students should open windows/doors to improve natural ventilation where possible. Estates and Facilities Management continue to monitor ventilation in all used spaces to ensure it is in line with industry and HSE guidelines. Physical barriers, for example Perspex screens, will remain in place.

Health and Safety colleagues advise that where possible we will retain one metre distancing in teaching spaces.

#### ***6. Are COVID-19 testing facilities still available for staff?***

Yes.

Lateral Flow Testing will remain on-campus throughout September 2021. Lateral Flow Tests are free for staff and students on campus. We encourage you to regularly test. Please follow this link for information on testing and relevant resources:

<https://www.chi.ac.uk/search/course-search/support-health-wellbeing/novel-coronavirus/covid-testing>

#### ***7. Where is the Lateral Flow (Asymptomatic) testing centre?***

The Lateral Flow Test Centre is located on Bishop Otter Campus in the Staff Club above Otters Restaurant, with access from the stairs next to the Otters Restaurant entrance.

[Please see our Campus Map for directions](#)

### **8. How do I get a Test?**

It is necessary to book a test to help with the management of capacity within the testing centre. Please click on the following link: [Book a test at Bishop Otter campus](#)

Lateral Flow Tests will also be available for staff and students at the SIZ counters on each campus and in the halls of residence. You can also pick up Lateral Flow Tests from testing centres and Boots pharmacies in town in addition to being able to order online.

### **9. I have been a close contact of a positive case in my household – what should I do?**

You should follow government/PHE guidance (31 August 2021):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection#exempt>

In summary, from 16 August 2021, individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- They are fully vaccinated
- They are below the age of 18 and 6 months
- They have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- They are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. The government encourages all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

### **10. Will departmental risk assessments be updated?**

Yes. Although most legal restrictions have been lifted and many people have been vaccinated, it is still possible to catch and spread COVID-19, even if you are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future, so we need to learn to live with it and manage the risk to ourselves and others. We still have a responsibility to protect others from risks to their health and safety, even where staff or students are vaccinated.

All departments have completed risk assessments for their individual areas and are tailoring safety measures to best fit with their local needs.

Departmental risk assessments are maintained in a central record and these are co-ordinated by the Health and Safety Team who will maintain an overview of documents. If you have any questions relating to a risk assessment and/or concerns about a risk assessment or a health and safety enquiry, please contact Kevin Hickman, [K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk](mailto:K.Hickman@chi.ac.uk), or Colin Combes, [C.Combes@chi.ac.uk](mailto:C.Combes@chi.ac.uk).

### **11. Will the Covid-19 Vaccination be available on-campus?**

No. However, if the opportunity for this becomes available, we will consider how this might be facilitated and update staff/students accordingly.

### **12. Is the Influenza (flu) vaccination available on-campus?**

Yes.

Staff can receive flu vaccinations here at the University on the following three dates:

Dates	Venue and Campus
Friday, 8 October 2021	Student Treatment Room, New Hall, BOC
Tuesday, 12 October 2021	Learning Resource Centre Annexe, BRC
Thursday, 14 October 2021	Student Treatment Room, New Hall, BOC

We will be using an online appointment service from Doctorcall so that staff can book a time that suits their Institute/Department and themselves and be assured of receiving their vaccine without queuing. **As with previous years, the online flu vaccine appointment booking service will be on a 'first come, first served' basis.** There will be no charge to staff for the flu vaccination. The on-line booking service will be available shortly (an all staff email will confirm).

### ***13. Do the HE unions and UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) have a view on vaccinations and testing?***

The University recognises the positive and helpful contribution that unions can make and we work closely with the unions in our University, UCU and UNISON. Earlier this year, in March 2021 and May 2021, UCEA and the HE Trade Unions agreed supporting statements on testing and vaccinations to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of higher education staff. The statement on vaccinations is included for information purposes, below:



### **Joint statement between UCEA and the HE Trade Unions on staff vaccinations**

UCEA and the joint trade unions (EIS, GMB, UCU, UNISON and Unite) have agreed this statement in their continued efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Higher Education staff.

UCEA and the joint trade unions:

- support the current roll out of Covid-19 vaccines across the UK
- will work together to encourage uptake of vaccination across the sector
- encourage all Higher Education (HE) staff to get vaccinated when offered the opportunity through the NHS
- recommend and encourage that all HE employers give paid time off to enable staff to attend vaccination appointments where it is not possible to schedule an appointment outside working hours
- support HEIs engaging with contractors, student unions and other employers operating on campus to encourage paid time off for the appointments for everyone working there where it is not possible to schedule an appointment outside working hours

- advise that if setting a vaccination policy, HE employers should follow a voluntary approach as part of their aims and objectives, recognising that there may be valid medical, cultural or other important factors why individuals may not want or be able to be vaccinated and, where not legally required to do so, they should suffer no detriment
- encourage HEIs, where staff have concerns about the vaccination process, to listen to them with respect and to seek to reassure them through the provision of factual material from e.g. PHE/NHS
- acknowledge that although vaccines work very well, they are not 100% effective; therefore, appropriate risk assessments and controls are still required
- reiterate that HEIs follow the principles for working safely on campus during the coronavirus pandemic and remind staff that they are required to comply with the necessary precautions/social distancing requirements and wear necessary PPE (unless exempt), even after being vaccinated.

25 March 2021

***14. Is there guidance for staff who have been considered clinically extremely vulnerable?***

Shielding advice was paused by the government on 1 April 2021. The latest government guidance, updated on 11 August 2021, is provided for information purposes:

[.https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you will previously have received a letter from the NHS or from your GP telling you this and you may have been advised to shield in the past. Although this requirement is no longer in place, should you require additional care and support to help you stay safe and well, please discuss with your manager.

***15. Are there any further planned changes to our annual leave entitlement this year?***

No.

There are no planned changes currently to annual leave entitlement this year and you should arrange to take your annual leave as agreed with your line manager within this leave year (i.e. 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022).

***16. Are there any travelling to work implications I need to be aware of?***

Whilst the legal requirement to wear a face covering has been lifted from 19 July, the government expects and recommends that people continue to wear face coverings in crowded areas, such as public transport. Wearing a face covering, especially when there is close contact between people in enclosed and crowded spaces, will still help to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

***17. Are there restrictions on travelling to England from abroad?***

Government guidance on travelling to England from abroad (updated as at 30 August 2021), provides guidance on red, amber and green rules and requirements, accessed via this link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>

If you are returning from travel abroad it is important to check the testing requirements and whether you need to self-isolate.

### ***18. I would like to work remotely on an on-going basis. What should I do?***

The expectation is for staff to be working on campus this academic year. Some staff, either for personal and/or lifestyle choices, have indicated their preference to work remotely on an on-going basis. The majority of our staff are working in front-facing roles, supporting students and/or staff, however, in the interests of fairness, where remote working might be a possibility, a Remote Working Policy has been implemented. You can find further details here:

[https://mailadminchiac.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/staffnet/Dept\\_HR/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B1891C634-A5CD-4D75-A6BD-1433C377E481%7D&file=Remote%20Working%20Policy%202021-23.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true](https://mailadminchiac.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/staffnet/Dept_HR/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B1891C634-A5CD-4D75-A6BD-1433C377E481%7D&file=Remote%20Working%20Policy%202021-23.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

### ***19. Reminder: I think I may have symptoms of Coronavirus – what should I do?***

If anyone in the University community becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms they must follow these government guidelines (updated 31 August 2021):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Even if you have been fully vaccinated you should ensure you follow these guidelines and report any positive results via the guidance available from the Staff Intranet. You can also contact [H.Girling@chi.ac.uk](mailto:H.Girling@chi.ac.uk), [K.Botto@chi.ac.uk](mailto:K.Botto@chi.ac.uk), [C.Meneely@chi.ac.uk](mailto:C.Meneely@chi.ac.uk) or [E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk](mailto:E.Whitaker@chi.ac.uk) to report a positive test result (and please confirm the same with your manager).

### ***20. Reminder: Does the University's Sickness Absence policy apply if I am unwell due to COVID-19?***

Yes. The University's sickness absence policy will apply if you are unwell due to coronavirus or any other illness. It is important for anyone unwell to report this to their line manager as with any period of sickness absence, and to ensure they keep in regular contact with their manager throughout their period of ill-health. The University's sickness absence procedures can be found on the Human Resources page of the Staff Intranet and your lead HR contact will also be able to provide support and advise. Email: [hr@chi.ac.uk](mailto:hr@chi.ac.uk)

### ***21. Reminder: How will we know what is happening in the University during this ongoing pandemic?***

We will continue to work with Heads and Directors of Department/Institute to respond to the latest guidance from the government, Department for Education, Office for Students, UUK and other external sources. Information will be shared in the following ways:

- The Vice-Chancellor will update staff and students where there are any required changes.
- The Covid-19 web pages will be refreshed to provide relevant information for students and staff.
- We will continue to brief the Senior Management Team on any external information we are required to implement.
- We will continue to work with the Students' union to respond to any advice we are required to implement.

- We will continue to work closely with Unison and UCU colleagues through the Joint Consultative Group to provide updates on any actions being taken.
- The Covid-19 Outbreak Control Group will continue to meet regularly to discuss and agree actions to support both our students and staff. Further details can be found here:  
[https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/cocg\\_constitution\\_and\\_tor\\_final\\_0.docx](https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/cocg_constitution_and_tor_final_0.docx)
- The University's Covid-19 Pledge can be found here:  
[https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/the\\_university\\_of\\_chichester\\_community\\_covid\\_pledge\\_0.docx](https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/the_university_of_chichester_community_covid_pledge_0.docx)
- The University's COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure for the management of COVID-19 outbreaks can be found here:  
[https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/covid19\\_standard\\_operating\\_procedure\\_0.docx](https://staffnet.chi.ac.uk/?q=system/files/covid19_standard_operating_procedure_0.docx)

## ***22. Reminder: I am feeling anxious - how can you help me with my health and wellbeing?***

If you are feeling concerned about your own health and wellbeing, please reach out and talk with your line manager about any personal concerns you might have, or approach a member of the team in Human Resources for confidential support, or contact one of our UCU or Unison representatives if you are a union member. We will all try to help you as far as possible. Several options, as well as referral for talking therapy or confidential counselling, are available for you, depending on requirements.

A range of wellbeing interventions have been available via the Professional Development Programme throughout 2020-21 and these were well attended. Provision will continue throughout 2021-22:

- ***Wellbeing 1-2-1's*** - Maryse from Chichester Wellbeing offers staff free and confidential 1-2-1 calls via MS Teams to discuss personal wellbeing. Chichester Wellbeing can provide support and advice with improving emotional wellbeing and managing stress, coping with change, eating well, losing weight, being more active, sleeping better, reducing alcohol consumption and stopping smoking. To book a wellbeing 1-2-1, please feel free to contact Maryse directly at [mbouille@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:mbouille@chichester.gov.uk) or on 01243 534755. We will be arranging face-to-face sessions within our professional development programme.
- ***Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Managers*** – This professional development session will help managers support their team(s) during times of stress or anxiety, providing useful tools for looking after themselves and others. This training will be available in our professional development programme – dates will be advertised shortly.
- ***Supporting employees to thrive*** - we have a range of online resources available to help support your mental health and wellbeing including dealing with stress and anxiety and concerns about Covid-19:  
<http://wordpress.chi.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>.
- ***Healthy You Plan*** - For any staff members who would like support with increasing their physical activity and improving their overall health and wellbeing. Email [exercisereferral@chi.ac.uk](mailto:exercisereferral@chi.ac.uk) for further details.

- ***Financial Wellbeing Support*** - HSBC provide all year-round support with your financial wellbeing and managing your money even if you don't bank with them. We have an exclusive employee link that provides access to reading resources, the financial fitness tool and the financial health check bookings: <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/employee-banking-solutions/financial-wellbeing/>. We will be organising some specific seminars – dates will be publicised in our professional development programme.
- ***Employee Assistance Programme*** – The University is launching a facility for all staff, available from the end of September 2021, to provide information, support and guidance. Further details will be advertised shortly.
- ***The Human Resources team*** are always happy to help with any queries or uncertainties you may have to do with your role at the University. This includes advice on employee relations issues, sickness absence, maternity and paternity, bereavement and loss, professional development and recruitment opportunities. You can find the various contact details here on the HR page of the Staff Intranet: <http://wordpress.chi.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/who-are-we/>