

# Universities and Colleges Sub Group - Update for the Outbreak Management Advisory Board

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## Summary

This regular report from the Universities and Colleges sub group provides updates for the Outbreak Management Board on the return of HE students; provision of vaccines; the uptake of testing; and the continuing low incidence of covid in our HE and FE institutions.

## Detail

### 1. HE Return

As expected, the Department of Education confirmed all remaining HE students could return to face to face study from 17 May, although - in line with the vast majority of HE institutions in the UK - teaching had already finished for most HE programmes across York's institutions. Despite this, all institutions have continued to work hard to ensure students who have returned have a range of activities they can participate in from organised sport through to on-campus social venues. Staff have also continued to work closely with the council's public health team to ensure that these activities are covid secure.

Term has now finished for York St John University and for HE students at Askham Bryan College, with term finishing on 25 June for the University of York. In conjunction with the Council we will keep track of how many students are remaining in York beyond term time; we expect a higher than usual number may continue to stay in the city to take advantage of employment opportunities as the local economy continues to unlock.

### 2. Vaccines

Plans to support student access to vaccinations continue to develop. Public health colleagues have been directly engaging with FE colleges and the proposal to run a vaccine clinic on the University of York campus in mid June is also well advanced. Both plans will depend on availability of vaccine supplies and where national eligibility criteria are for given age groups. Calls for expressions of interest for an on-campus vaccine clinic have been well received demonstrating that students are very keen to get vaccinated when the JVCI criteria enable them to do so.

### **3. Testing and home test kits**

Take up of home testing kits continues to be popular with over 1,000 students having now picked up packets of home testing kits. The University of York has also recently surveyed its students to better understand their perceptions and use of asymptomatic testing. Of those who responded to the survey there was near universal awareness of the University-CYC testing offer (98%) and three quarters of students who were not studying fully on-line reported that they had used the test centre. Of students using the test centre nearly 50% are attending regularly (at least once a week or more).

The survey has also given us some good indications of what would drive increased use of testing, with many students in their free text comments linking testing to face to face tuition; a number of respondents said they would test more (or start testing) if face to face teaching was available to them but that while they were not accessing campus they did not see the incentive to take regular tests.

### **4. Update on cases**

All institutions continue to report a very low level of Covid cases, continuing the trends we have seen since the Christmas break. At the time of writing it is still slightly too early to see if the latest stage of unlocking (from 17 May, including in-door socialising) has affected rates of covid, but at present we are not seeing any increase in cases reported to either University.

Universities and Colleges Sub-Group  
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