

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

Summary

This regular report from the Universities and Colleges sub group provides updates for the Outbreak Management Board on preparations for the start of term across our institutions, on efforts to ensure HE and FE students across the city are vaccinated, and on changes to how test and trace now operates in educational settings

Detail

1. Vaccinations

Working closely with Nimbuscare and other NHS and City partners there has been significant activity across all HE and FE institutions in the city to make vaccinations as accessible as possible for our students. Vaccine pop up clinics and information stalls are planned, or have already taken place, at all four Universities and Colleges and there are extensive plans for pop up vaccination clinics at both Universities during their Freshers' weeks. Clinics run by Nimbuscare in the city centre, and in residential areas have also been positively received by our students.

All institutions have also been regularly promoting uptake of vaccinations to our students using our own communications material; locally coordinated messages and collateral from national campaigns.

A combination of easy availability of vaccinations (either on-site, or in other convenient locations) and these communication messages has seen a significant uptake of vaccinations across the student body. The University of York, for example, has been collecting data on vaccine status during enrollment and to-date 90% of those who have enrolled have told us they are either fully or partially vaccinated. This suggests that our students are engaging with the vaccination process in an extremely positive way and uptake is currently tracking ahead of the national average across all age groups.

2. Preparations for start of term

Following the move to Stage 4 in the roadmap out of lockdown, restrictions continue to be lifted or revised across England. The overall approach by Government is to reduce the levels of hard controls given high levels of vaccination across the population. For our sector specifically, DfE have also been clear on their expectations that education should take place in person with as little restriction as possible to normal modes of teaching and learning.

Across the city our HE and FE institutions are following DfE and wider guidance carefully, ensuring that we have a range of control measures in place across our sites including regular testing, vaccination, face coverings where appropriate, maximising ventilation, hand hygiene measures, and continuing to regularly promote public health messages across our communications channels.

We have also been closely involved in co-creating a new covid-aware campaign with colleagues in the City Council. The headline for the campaign - as you may have already seen on posters and on-line - is **Protect. Respect. Be Kind.**

This campaign aims to set expectations and shape behaviours of our community, and the priority messages initially will cover the importance of getting vaccinated; wearing face coverings; staying away from work or study if you're feeling unwell; getting regularly tested; and isolating when you've tested positive or have been told to by NHS Test and Trace;

3. Track and Trace

Arrangements for Track and Trace in educational settings have also changed over the summer and responsibility for track and trace now rests with the NHS' central tracing team rather than individual providers. However, across our institutions we are continuing to track covid cases carefully and share this data regularly with colleagues within the Public Health team at the City Council to ensure we spot and respond to potential outbreaks or clusters of cases.

Universities and Colleges Sub-Group
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