**LJMU Covid Operations Group Update (26th October 2021)**

Following the Liverpool Health Protection Board statement to people living, working, or visiting the city ([Liverpool HPB](https://liverpoolexpress.co.uk/blog-we-need-to-take-action-now-ahead-of-a-difficult-winter/)) the Covid Operations Group have met to consider any further action necessary to keep our communities safe.

As Matt Ashton, Director of Public Health for Liverpool states, the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over, and we are expecting a lot more flu this winter. Local action is needed now, to look after ourselves and each other, to prevent us having a winter crisis, and importantly to keep our critical services running, including education.

As result, COG have taken the following action with immediate effect:

**Wear a face cover at all times**

We are moving with immediate effect to mandate the wearing of face coverings in all teaching and research activities. We continue to provide free face coverings at reception points and expect everyone (other than approved exemptions) to comply. We continue to expect face coverings to be worn in all communal spaces including offices and libraries. You can remove your face cover when you are eating or sat at a single person desk or study space.

**Hybrid working**

We have already introduced hybrid working and will continue with this approach across the university to maintain and protect face to face teaching, research and all student-facing services. Staff must be on campus to provide the services to our students they are expecting.

If you chair university staff group meetings please move these online rather than face to face. University events with large groups on campus can continue and we will be signposting to ensure that Covid safe practices are in operation during these events.

**Ventilation**

We are following government and professional body guidance regarding ventilation and have assessed every space on campus to ensure this is being met. In mechanically ventilated rooms we are complying with guidance that flow rates are increased, only 100% fresh outside air is circulated, and the systems run for one hour before and after teaching times.

In rooms with no mechanical ventilation systems, we will rely on the opening of external windows (natural ventilation) and have installed CO2 monitors in many naturally ventilated rooms with more to be introduced from the 1st November. We have also purchased air purifying units which are being introduced into spaces where necessary.

**Looking after yourself and others**

**Don’t delay your vaccines**

We strongly recommend vaccination as the single most effective action to combat Covid-19. Whilst vaccination is a personal choice it helps protect you and those around you, including the vulnerable and elderly. It remains the case that most hospitalised Covid-19 patients are unvaccinated, and as such we will continue to work with our health partners to increase vaccine take up.

**Covid-19 testing and what to do if you have symptoms**

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 don’t have symptoms but can still infect others. **Everyone should continue to take a lateral flow test twice per week, and these are freely available at reception points.**

If your lateral flow test is positive you should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test. If you also have any symptoms of Covid-19 you should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test. PCR testing is available at the joint LJMU/University of Liverpool test centre ([COVID-19 | Liverpool John Moores University (ljmu.ac.uk)](https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward/covid-19))

**LJMU Moving Forward Together**

We want to do everything we can to protect face to face teaching, research and our student services. In doing so, we all have an individual and collective responsibility to keep our communities safe both within and outside of university.

LJMU’s Outbreak Management Plan was approved by Matt Ashton, Director of Public Health on 14th October 2021 and is available at the link [Moving Forward Together](https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward). The University Covid Operations Group also continue to meet regularly to review national and local guidance.

There is huge complexity in our planning and the decisions we are taking. Please look out for regular university Covid-19 updates and refer to Liverpool City Council’s Covid webpages at [LCC Covid-19 updates](https://liverpool.gov.uk/communities-and-safety/emergency-planning/coronavirus/) for more information.

**Phil Vickerman**

**Chair of the Covid Operations Group**

**26th October 2021**