

**LJMU reflection on the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) discussion
on the reopening of university campuses (published July 25th 2020)**

On 25th July 2020 SAGE published details on consideration of submissions from the DfE regarding what universities should consider with the return of students and staff to campuses across the UK. SAGE has outlined key points for universities to consider (no specific expectations) particularly in light of the levels of student mobility in September and October 2020, and the impact this may have in relation to COVID-19.

IMT have audited this documentation to ensure the University is addressing the points made by SAGE, and this is being shared as part of the University's ongoing Recovery Planning.

This IMT update is accurate as of: Friday 4th September 2020

	Key points by SAGE	LJMU reflection and actions
1	Campuses should be able to demonstrate they are 'COVID-19 secure' in line with government and public health guidance.	<p>1) IMT are acting upon guidance as an integral, and continuing part of its recovery planning. The University receive regular government updates from the DfE, and other Departments into the Vice Chancellors Office, and these are acted upon by IMT.</p> <p>The University are a member of UUK and have attended COVID-19 briefings regularly. UUK are the national body that represents all universities. Members of IMT were chosen for their skill sets, and experience relevant to COVID-19.</p> <p>The microsite has documentation for students and staff demonstrating steps taken to ensure the campus is COVID-19 secure. This can be accessed at:</p> <p>https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/moving-forward</p>
2	Directors of public health have been asked to consider deploying significant mobile testing capacity in university towns and cities in September.	<p>1) LJMU are working with Liverpool Health Partners to co-ordinate testing regimes. A COVID procedure has been published on the microsite detailing how the University will respond to outbreaks.</p> <p>The Director of Student Advice and Wellbeing is a member of the CAMPUS Shield working group along with other HEIs in the city, Public health Liverpool and local GPs. The group's Terms of Reference detail communication and information to all partners around outbreaks within the student population as key aspects of the group.</p> <p>The University of Liverpool have developed a partnership with Liverpool Clinical Labs to deliver tests on campus. LJMU have invested in this initiative, and details will be published on the LJMU microsite.</p>
3	Based on details from the DfE, SAGE note the main risks on reopening campuses (no further guidance at present) are:	<p>1) LJMU are working with UUK and government agencies to address any requirements and expectations with regard to student mobility. Guidance on COVID19 procedures for the return of students is on the microsite. In addition, all new students have been advised on detailed plans to make move-in as COVID safe as possible</p>

<p>(1) Movement of around 1 million students across the country, with potential impact on transmission of the virus, at the beginning and end of terms;</p> <p>(2) Students moving from their family households to set up new, temporary households during term time, then wanting to return to their family households at the end of term;</p> <p>(3) Additional pressure on public transport infrastructure around universities, particularly if there is a continued need to limit capacity to preserve social distancing;</p> <p>(4) Commuter students, who travel regularly to university from home.</p> <p>(5) International students arriving from overseas will create a further potential impact on the transmission of the virus.</p>	<p>The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance, and in order to observe social distancing and appropriate behaviour on campus, we have made sure that our university is COVID-safe. All university buildings will have COVID-specific directions and will have a clearly marked out one-way systems with advice signposted throughout.</p> <p>We will have marshals around all of our university buildings to make sure that you will be safe and you feel comfortable around other students and staff. We have also increased our cleaning rotas and will have cleaning materials and hand sanitisers at stations around all campus sites.</p> <p>A Code of Conduct has been established for staff and students when on campus – See: https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~media/files/ljmu/microsites/moving-forward/code-of-conduct-poster.pdf</p> <p>2) LJMU recognise this observation, but have no authority to prevent students from returning at the end of an academic term. LJMU will act on any government guidance as necessary though.</p> <p>3) Public transport will be impacted by students travelling out to the IM Marsh Campus. Arriva are aware of this as they provide the bus passes. With reduced face to face contact, public transport needs will be reduced though.</p> <p>4) LJMU has circa 40-45% commuter students. LJMU will produce guidance for students travelling from areas that may be under a lockdown (this will be in line with government advice). LJMU will also act upon any public health guidance with regard to restricted travel, and or lockdown rules.</p>
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<p>4</p>	<p>Dfe have provided SAGE with details on student and staff numbers, student mobility and regional inflows caused by HE, and the likely numbers of students requiring face to face teaching, contact hours and class sizes. Universities should consider:</p> <p>(1) What this means for testing, contact tracing and physical distancing to contain outbreaks.</p> <p>(2) Changes to teaching provision, including online learning and physical distancing rules on campus</p> <p>(3) How local campus lockdowns will be managed.</p> <p>(4) Whether providers have considered teaching online for the autumn term, then return to campus in January, or progress with a January start and compressed academic year, or both.</p>	<p>1) The University of Liverpool have developed a partnership with Liverpool Clinical Labs, and LJMU are an integral part of this service. The microsite has details of the testing and contact tracing process.</p> <p>The system for LJMU staff and students will be targeted specifically when individuals display symptoms and wish to take a test. Initially LJMU have the facility for 100 tests per day, but this can be flexed according to circumstances. This arrangement is in addition to existing NHS and public health facilities.</p> <p>Physical distancing signs are on campus, along with marshalls, and maximum room capacity data.</p> <p>2) The University has developed a blended learning methodology – Active Blended learning (ABL) – which places emphasis on engagement and interaction with course materials through a mix of synchronous and asynchronous on-line activity supported by face-to-face delivery.</p> <p>Staff support and student and staff guidance documents have been produced to support the implementation of ABL.</p> <p>Face-to-face sessions will not be used to deliver lectures, but will be used to support the on-line material as appropriate to the discipline. This approach is being adopted to ensure that programme delivery can continue for those who are shielding or should lockdown be imposed.</p>

		<p>Detailed discussions have taken place at School-level to ascertain the exact nature of the face-to-face element, so that it supports the needs of the discipline. In some instances, face-to-face delivery takes place exclusively in generic teaching space and in other cases it takes place in specialist teaching space (e.g. laboratories and/or PC Suites]).</p> <p>The face-to-face elements are being delivered in a Covid-19 secure manner.</p> <p>3) A process is detailed on the microsite regarding how any local campus lockdown will be managed.</p> <p>4) In relation to on campus teaching, a number of scenarios were considered. Ultimately, it was determined that starting the year as normally as possible is the best option for our students. This decision was taken through IMT and approved by ELT. All documentation detailing the decision making is on a dedicated SharePoint site.</p>
5	<p>Universities should consider the efficacy of protective measures to break chains of transmission such as:</p> <p>(1) How well the concept of 'bubbles' might serve to inhibit or accelerate transmission;</p> <p>(2) Student accommodation rules, households and moving in/out;</p> <p>(3) Potential implications for internal migrations at the start and end of term, and the relative risk for new cohorts of students in forming new households and course groups.</p>	<p>1) Study bubbles have been considered at programme level where this is feasible to be achieved.</p> <p>2) (2&3) Providers have developed COVID19 safe rules for their particular accommodation. This includes safe move in procedures, safety measures within accommodation such as communal areas being closed; bookings for other spaces etc. Guidance has been developed regarding what we expect of students and links with the behavioural code. Students are being advised not to arrive at university if they have experienced any symptoms in the past 14 days, and are also advised not to travel if they develop symptoms once in Liverpool. Registering with a GP is also critical and referenced.</p>

	<p>(4) Needing to understand impacts on local healthcare; testing capabilities; and public transport and other infrastructure at the influx and subsequent patterns of movement of students.</p>	<p>4) The University of Liverpool have developed a partnership with Liverpool Clinical Labs to deliver tests on campus. LJMU have invested in this initiative, and details will be published on the LJMU microsite.</p>
6	<p>DfE have asked SAGE for guidance on some specific areas, (advice yet to be forthcoming) including:</p> <p>(1) University libraries - requirements from lending; studying texts that cannot be removed and use of libraries as a workspace for some students;</p> <p>(2) Performance-based courses: particularly taking into account the challenges of social distancing in these contexts, and the additional risk of some activities.</p> <p>(3) Potential need to respond to a renewed regional lockdown and/or an outbreak within a university. – Including the relative hierarchy of measures that a university can and should enact – along with local authorities to respond to an outbreak.</p> <p>(4) What (if any) additional Covid-secure measures would be recommended beyond those in place to manage wider social interaction, arguing that there is a case for additional guidance setting out clearly the accountability for complying with government guidelines in particular in relation to student union organised events.</p>	<p>1) LJMU Library have very few study texts that cannot be removed other than a few heavily used books that will be released for loan as part of a click and collect service. The exception is Special Collections and Archives, but visits to the reading room will be by appointment only, and researchers will need to specify the materials they wish to consult ahead of their visit so that they can be quarantined for 72 hours beforehand. The materials will be quarantined again for 72 hours once they have finished before being returned to the shelves. Materials required for class teaching are being digitised so that they can be accessed online.</p> <p>2) Detailed discussions have taken place at School-level to ascertain the exact nature of the face-to-face element, so that it supports the needs of the discipline. For activity in the Liverpool Screen School as an example, face-to-face delivery takes place exclusively in specialist teaching space. All face-to-face elements are being delivered in a Covid-19 secure manner.</p> <p>3) LJMU have a procedure in place for dealing with incidents of COVID-19 outbreak, namely the 'Procedure for the management of suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19'. This is accessible at the LJMU microsite at:</p> <p>https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~media/files/ljmu/microsites/moving-forward/guidance-and-principles-for-covid-risk-assessment.pdf</p> <p>4) The Incident Management Team (IMT), chaired by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer meet regularly to review, and approve all</p>

		COVID-19 processes. IMT report directly to the Vice Chancellor and Executive Leadership Team
7	<p>The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPIMO), in combination with a paper from a Children’s Task & Finish Group on risks associated with the reopening of education settings in September have raised a number of points for further consideration by universities:</p> <p>(1) It’s essential universities have clear protocols in place for reactive closures and/or quarantines, and how this interacts with segmentation of the student and staff populations (e.g. whether the household is quarantined, and contacts isolated; or if swab-positive students are sent to separate residences for self-isolation etc).</p> <p>(2) What processes will be put in place to support vulnerable groups, as well as wider implications for student welfare.</p> <p>(3) Managing risk of students falling ill and/or testing positive returning to their parental homes, rather than isolating at university.</p> <p>(4) As part of efforts to manage social distancing effectively, universities should be planning to timetable effectively in a way that staggers arrival and departure times in a way that will also reduce pressure on public transport.</p> <p>(5) As well as considering infection of university staff, universities should consider the potential for here infection ‘spillover’ into the local community. This, will depend on the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A protocol has been developed to support this work that enforces the use of government guidelines in all areas of work. Students will self-isolate within their households and will not be moved to separate accommodation. Testing on campus will also allow for a swifter return to activity on the occasion of a negative result. 2) Extensive guidance is available to students and support will be given where students have enhanced levels of vulnerability. Additional emergency accommodation has been secured to allow for some self-isolation away from households if required for health and/or wellbeing purposes. Increased provision is in place for students in partner halls focused on ensuing that students know how to access support and can achieve this in a timely manner. 3) Students are being advised to register with a GP in Liverpool and that they should not travel home if they become unwell. Additional support will be available for deliveries of food and medicine should it be required for students who are unwell. 4) University timetabling has been scheduled to manage safe movement of students and staff in and around the campus. Marshals have been recruited to manage movement on campus. 5) From a student perspective, this is the purpose and mission of the CAMPUS Shield group and it will continue to meet regularly throughout the academic year. The Director of Student Advice and Wellbeing is also part of a national Local Authority Best practice group developing such protocols.

	<p>characteristics of the university (or universities) and level of integration with the wider population – and potential ‘seeding’ of cases from student migrations could be modelled</p>	<p>A communications campaign for students has been, and continues to be delivered. A Student and Staff Code of Conduct has been established with respect to social distancing and following all University and Government guidance. If necessary disciplinary actions can be taken for breaches of the Code. See:</p> <p>https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~media/files/ljmu/microsites/moving-forward/code-of-conduct-poster.pdf</p>
8	<p>SAGE will in the future consider two central recommendations from the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPIMO) with regard to what role universities should have in relation to: (1) Testing and monitoring; and (2) Outbreak response.</p>	<p>1) The University of Liverpool have developed a partnership with Liverpool Clinical Labs to deliver tests on campus. LJMU have invested in this initiative, and details will be published on the LJMU microsite at:</p> <p>2) LJMU have a procedure in place for dealing with incidents of COVID-19 outbreak, namely the ‘Procedure for the management of suspected and confirmed cases of Covid-19’. This is accessible at the LJMU microsite at:</p> <p>https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~media/files/ljmu/microsites/moving-forward/guidance-and-principles-for-covid-risk-assessment.pdf</p>