GUIDANCE

Higher education: coronavirus

Information about higher education and student support during the coronavirus pandemic.

Part of: Higher education: coronavirus

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Contents

Coronavirus guidance for students

Coronavirus guidance for staff

Returning to university for the new term: students

Testing

Coronavirus guidance for students

Will higher education students and staff be prioritised for the Covid-19 vaccine?

The majority of higher education students and staff are unlikely to be offered the vaccine for the foreseeable future unless they are in one of the priority groups. These groups have been prioritised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) at UK level. These groups include those over 80 years of age, a care home resident or member of staff at a care home, a member of staff or student in frontline health and social care or are extremely clinically vulnerable (formerly shielding).

Any student or member of staff in one of these categories will be offered a vaccination, when vaccination begins for that group.

Eligibility for the vaccine will apply equally to international students and staff.

What are the rules on teaching at universities?

Universities will continue to provide a combination of in person teaching and blended learning. This will minimise the need to travel and will allow students to work from home as well as attend essential in person teaching and learning sessions.

While incidents of Covid-19 rose in the student population at the start of term, evidence shows this is taking place in student accommodation and in social settings outside the teaching and learning environment. Universities are operating Covid-secure campuses and adhering to strict social distancing. Coronavirus cases amongst staff remain low.

If you live off campus, you are able to commute to university to access education when necessary.

Universities have worked hard to enable learning to take place in a Covid-secure environment this year, based on Welsh law and Welsh Government guidance. Much has been done to change the provision of teaching and adapt to the situation so that students can undertake their studies as safely as possible throughout the pandemic.

But you should contact your university if you have any concerns. They are best placed to support you and alleviate any concerns you may have.

Higher education institutions are responsible for the planning and delivery of their provision, including determining what educational services to provide in person. The Welsh Government expects universities to consider the needs of students in providing alternative and accessible formats for both teaching and assessment. Students should be able to leave with qualifications that are a fair reflection of their abilities, whilst maintaining quality and standards. No student should be disadvantaged unfairly for studying at this time.

We have asked our universities to take all reasonable steps to help support any student who chooses to access learning remotely.

See our guidance for more information.

I don’t have access to online learning. What should I do?

We understand that all higher education institutions are making sure all learners can access e-learning, for example through loaning laptops to learners who do not have facilities at home.

You should contact your university if you have any concerns. They are best placed to alleviate any concerns and discuss how they can help support you.

Who should I gather with?

You should only gather indoors with your household.

For more information see our guidance and the general question and answers.

I am living in shared accommodation – how does this affect my household/extended household?

See our guidance.

Can I meet with people in my extended household?

Under alert level 4 extended households are not permitted.

However, people who live alone can form an extended household or support bubble with one other household – so as to be treated as a single household under the rules.

This includes students who are in single person households. If you form a support bubble, this may be with another single person household or with a larger household. You are then able to meet. See the guidance on single person households.

Please help us keep Wales safe.

My partner lives in another flat, can I still meet them indoors?

If you do not live in the same household as your partner you are not able to meet them indoors.

There are limited exceptions to this but in practice they don’t apply unless you both live alone or are an individual household.

The Welsh Government knows that this is not what life is normally about, but sadly we don’t live in normal times.

Please help us by sticking to the rules. Please help us keep Wales safe.

I am self-isolating how will I get my essentials?

Speak to your student support services at your university. If you haven’t already, tell them that you are self-isolating and require help. They will have processes set up to help with day-to-day essential such as delivering food, laundry, medication and toiletries etc.

Your university should also support you with your well-being at this difficult time and may have buddy systems or other support networks that can help you.

There are also organisations that can help such as Mind Cymru and Student Space.

I am living at a term time address - can I go home?

Yes, students who routinely spend time both away at university and at home are considered to have two households for the purposes of the coronavirus restrictions.

Under alert level 4, you should not travel home for a visit unless you have a reasonable excuse to travel such as at the start or end of term, for work or because of concerns about health and wellbeing.

There may be different rules in place in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I am worried about my health and well-being and feeling very isolated?

The Welsh Government is aware that universities in Wales have a range of activities aimed at supporting students’ mental health and wellbeing, supported by funding made available by the Welsh Government.

Welsh Government guidance states that universities should consider planning and managing social events to support student mental health and well-being and contribute to the university experience. In addition, legal, organised social interactions will help to manage and mitigate the risk of unplanned gatherings.

Our guidance also recognises that ‘virtual’ gatherings will play an important role in supporting students’ wellbeing and enabling safe socialising and should be encouraged.

This support should be extended to students who are experiencing anxiety and stress may wish to contact their student welfare services at their university or organisations such as Mind Cymru and Student Space.

There are also a number of national charities who may be able to help. We recognise how difficult a time this is for students and that they face unique issues.

If you are experiencing a significant exacerbation of your symptoms, contact your GP, NHS 111, your student support or someone you trust.

You are able to travel if you need to access support, this may include access to medical services or to provide or receive care, including for your own mental health and well-being.

You should download and use the NHS Covid-19 app to protect yourself and your friends and family. The app has a number of tools to protect you, including contact tracing, local area alerts and venue check-in.

Please see guidance on the NHS Covid App.

What are the travel implications? Can I leave the county/country/UK? Can I go home?

Students must be aware of any travel restrictions in place for international travel.

Students arriving in the UK must also follow the quarantine rules on arrival in the UK.

Under level 4, you should not travel home for a visit and should only travel when necessary, for example, at the start or end of term, for work or because of concerns about their wellbeing.

Further information on travel rules for entering and leaving Wales.

Is it safe to remain at university?

Yes. Universities have worked hard to ensure that their campuses are Covid secure. The Welsh Government has developed guidance to assist the university sector in their preparations. As autonomous bodies, universities are responsible for the provision of their courses for staff and students, and all universities in Wales have ensured that students undertook their studies as safely as possible throughout the pandemic.

The evidence is clear that remaining in your university accommodation is the safest place for you to be at the moment. Whilst there have been outbreaks of Covid-19 at universities in Wales, these have been well-managed by PHW, the local health boards and the universities.

We know clusters have been contained within university communities and have not spread to the wider community, or to those who may be more prone to poorer outcomes from COVID-19 because they have particular existing health conditions, complications or they are older.

The scientific advice has been clear that there may be outbreaks among students, as with any group in society and the measures in place are designed to keep students, staff and local communities safe. The wellbeing of our young people has been at the centre of decision-making throughout the pandemic and will continue to be so.

There is a careful balancing of the risk of any potential infections and ensuring that young people – who have faced incredible disruption during the pandemic – can continue with their education and be supported by their families, their universities and this Government.

Your university will have provided clear guidance to you on how you can act responsibly and minimise risk to yourselves, your family, friends and community.

This should include guidance on following the rules on only gathering within your households, on avoiding parties, on social distancing, on getting tested if symptomatic, and on self-isolating when required.

Can I meet people I don’t live with in my garden?

Gardens are treated as part of the home. That means you can only meet the people in your household or contact group or support bubble there. The same applies to visiting other people in their gardens.

I’m travelling to Wales from outside the UK. Can I still come?

Yes, access to education is a reasonable excuse to travel to Wales and so is moving home. Please see guidance on travel.

Our international students are a welcome part of our communities in Wales. International students, from certain countries outside the UK will need to comply with the self-isolating requirements in Wales.

Please see the list of countries exempt from the self-isolation rules in Wales and the Coronavirus (COVID-19): travel corridors, UK Government.

However, if you are travelling from countries not on the list of exempt countries, outside the UK, you will need to self-isolate. This means students will not be able to leave the place they are staying until the self isolation period has ended.

You should speak to your university as they will be able to support you in the self-isolation period.

Contact with others:

Self-isolation means you should not have visitors, including friends and family, unless they are providing essential care. The only friends and family students can have contact with are those who travelled with them or the people they are staying with. The people they are with should also self-isolate.

People you travelled with:

Where you travelled together with other students and you are sharing accommodation, you can continue to have contact amongst yourselves, but it is recommended that where possible social distancing should be maintained.

Will I be able to visit the University library?

You are able to visit the library, but you should think if you can access online library services or click and collect for loans as this will help limit in-person contact and reduce the spread of the virus. Campus libraries can remain open to students and staff for educational purposes and will continue to maintain Covid-secure measures.

In the library students must maintain social distancing, wear a face covering and adhere to the increased hygiene measures, such as hand washing and using your own surface wipes (or those provided) to clean the work area.

Students must use the library independently and must not gather in study spaces.

Will I be able to use the study spaces on campus?

Study spaces on campus remain open and will continue to maintain strict Covid-secure measures.

Try to think carefully about whether you need to use these spaces as you should try to only use these spaces if you do not have a suitable place to study at home, or if you are on campus and it would not be reasonable for you to return home (or the place you live in term-time) between in-person teaching.

Your university may have a booking system in-place, you should contact your student services team to find out what arrangements are in place.

Students must maintain social distancing, wear a face covering and adhere to the increased hygiene measures, such as hand washing and using your own surface wipes (or those provided) to clean the work area.

Students should use the study spaces independently and must not gather in study spaces.

I am a research student, will I be able to continue studying/working/carrying out my research at the University?

You will be able to continue your research in-person, and gather with others to carry-out that research if you are unable to do so from home. If you are able to carry out your research from home or without gathering with others then that is what you should do.

I am a researcher working at the University, will I be able to continue working at the University?

You should work from home if you can. But if your research work cannot be reasonably conducted from home you are able to go to the university.

I am a researcher in an ongoing research study, will I be able to continue taking part in this research?

If you are able to carry out your research work from home or without gathering with others, then that is what you should do.

Note for researchers: You should think whether contact with research participants in person is crucial or whether an alternative approach could be taken to allow participation without the need for contact with others.

Coronavirus guidance for staff

I work in the post-16 sector, what does this mean for me?

Your employer will have risk assessed the building/s where you work and introduced procedures to ensure that your environment is COVID-secure. If necessary, you would have received a personal risk assessment or equality impact assessment specific to your personal circumstances.

f you are extremely vulnerable, the Welsh Government guidance recommends that working from home is the default position unless your employer can assure your safety. Please see our guidance..

What should I do when in work?

You should only remain in work to carry out duties that cannot be done from home.

We know that interactions between staff increase the risk of transmission. Therefore, face to face contact with other members of staff should be avoided if possible, you should think about using alternative approaches such as online meetings.

Your employer will need to ensure that any work spaces, including offices, are COVID-secure, that social distancing measures can be maintained and that strict hygiene rules are followed in the work place.

You should avoid sharing an indoor space with people you do not live with, this will include areas such as staff rooms.

You should not gather in a staff room with people who you do not live with, as this will increase your contacts and the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

We know that talking to people is a main contributor for spreading COVID-19. The more people you meet and speak to, the more you increase the risk to yourself and others.

We are asking people not to think primarily about what they are allowed to do, but what is the most sensible thing to do. Only through everybody trying their hardest to follow this guidance will we be able to avoid further lockdowns.

What sort of conversation should I have with a member of my team who is worried about needing to come into work?

There are a number of models which can be used to support managers during discussions with their teams about an individual’s personal risk factors when returning to, or remaining in, the workplace. The aim is to help enable good quality conversations between managers and colleagues about any personal circumstances which may increase risk from coronavirus, and to agree any actions which need to be carried out. 'Talking with your workers about working safely during the coronavirus pandemic' is guidance from the Health and Safety Executive on how employers may approach this conversation with staff.

Returning to university for the new term: students

Can I travel back to university in Wales?

Travel for educational purposes is a reasonable excuse to leave home. This includes moving to a term time address and commuting for students and staff.

You would have a reasonable excuse to travel from England, Scotland or Northern Ireland to Wales and vice versa if you are travelling to access education.

However, students should not return to universities in Wales until they are notified by their university that they should do so and in-person learning will resume.

Current restrictions would also allow international students to travel to the UK for educational purposes, although you would need to follow the appropriate quarantine rules when you arrive. Please contact your university before you arrive.

Can a family member drop me off at university?

Yes they can, but make sure the person is part of your household or extended household.

Plan your journey and check for disruption before you leave to help keep everyone safe when travelling.

You should avoid making unnecessary stops during your journey.

If you need to travel you should follow travelling safely guidance.

You should:

- plan, and avoid the busiest routes, as well as busy times
- keep your distance when you travel, where possible
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly
- wear a face covering on public transport in Wales unless you are exempt

Different rules may apply in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

If you travel by car the virus is highly likely to pass between the other people in the car. That is because you are in a confined space and small droplets from speaking, singing along to the radio and breathing will quickly fill that space and be breathed in by everyone in the car. We know these droplets are the main way the virus spreads.

Can I car share with another student/a friend to travel to university?

Yes you can car share with another student or a friend if you don’t have an alternative form of transport.

If you travel by car you are highly likely to pass any virus to the other people in the car. That is because you are in a confined space and small droplets from speaking, singing along to the radio and breathing will quickly fill that space and be breathed in by everyone in the car. We know these droplets are the main way the virus spreads.

Plan your journey and check for disruption before you leave to help keep everyone safe when travelling.

You should avoid making unnecessary stops during your journey.

If you need to travel you should follow travelling safely guidance.

You should:

- plan, and avoid the busiest routes, as well as busy times
- keep your distance when you travel, where possible
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly
- wear a face covering on public transport in Wales unless you are exempt

Different rules may apply in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

How will student return in the new term be organised?

We have asked universities to organise a staggered return to campus, enabling students on different courses and different year groups to return on different dates.

Your university should communicate your return date with you as soon as possible.

If you are on a health care course, have a placement, practical elements or required laboratory hours, you may be asked to return as planned.

This may mean some students need to stay home longer than anticipated with online learning at the start of term.

We’ve asked universities to stagger the return to allow for every student to access the university testing pilot.

Students should get tested on return. Testing is an important tool to help stop the spread of the virus in student accommodation.

You should opt in to testing to help keep education open as this will also provide confidence in in-person learning.

Testing is important to help keep Wales safe. We know we will see cases as students travel from all over the UK and reform households. To minimise the risk of outbreaks we are asking all students to get a test, lay low for 3 days, so not to meet others from outside their household, not to go out other than to exercise with someone in the household or for essential medical reasons and then get another test.

Students need to work together and all agree to this short period of laying low, taking extra care and getting tested. This will help avoid mass outbreaks in student accommodation and repeated periods of self isolation next term.

A staggered start will enable universities to offer all students a Lateral Flow test on arrival. All students should participate in the testing to help keep themselves, their friends and the community safe.

We want to minimise disruption to students' education, but we need to continually take into account the risk of additional spread of Covid-19.

Can students use public transport to travel to university?

Yes, students can travel using public transport but the overall message is stick to the latest guidance on travel. Please see the latest **guidance**.

In addition, we would recommend that you book in advance and plan ahead. The Transport for Wales Capacity Checker will help plan journeys.

You should only travel if you need to. You can travel to access education when face to face learning resumes. This is a reasonable excuse to leave home.

Remember if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus or have been asked to self-isolate by a contact tracer you must stay home and cannot travel.

How can I access a test?

Your university will contact you regarding when your course will resume and provide information on how to book a test.

You should organise the first test as close to your day of arrival as possible. You should book your second test 3 days later.

What is the difference between laying low and self-isolating?

Laying low means not mixing with other people as much as possible, including those you live with, your contact group or household.

When you are with other people in your contact group or household, you should follow the rules on social distancing and washing hands, your hands regularly, wear a face covering in shared spaces and frequently clean shared areas including kitchen and bathroom facilities remember you should clean those areas before and after use.

You should stay home but you can still go out for a walk or to exercise but this should ideally be on your own or someone you live with.

You should stay home and keep shopping to an absolute minimum. In plain level it you can only to go out for essential items, such as food or medicine. If you can, ask friends, family or neighbours to help out or online delivery for when you and not to simply brought supplies for the first three days if you can.

If you are worried about being able to lay low, please get in touch with your university.

Will my household all have the same arrival date and be asked to lay low together?

Not necessarily. Your arrival date will depend on which course you are on and what year you are in.

You should arrive back at your university accommodation, when you are asked to by your university, and remember to take extra care.

You may find that there are others in your accommodation laying low at different times over the coming weeks.

To keep safe, you will need to remember who is trying to lay low and help each other to minimise contacts and keep shared areas clean. Your university will provide more information and guidance. It is easier for everyone to keep contacts to a minimum in the first few weeks to help keep you all safe.

Will I be able to claim a rent rebate for those weeks that I'm not able to access my university accommodation?

Your rental agreement is between you and either your landlord or university.

As autonomous bodies, rental agreements are the responsibility of individual universities and private landlords. Universities have put in place to support students with accommodation issues and many providing hardship issues, but these are the responsibility of the individual institution. I would advise you to discuss this with the university or your landlord.

Rent is further advice for tenants in the context of Covid-19 here.

Students may be entitled to refunds from certain accommodation providers depending on the terms of their contract and their particular circumstances. If you need help, organisations such as Citizens Advice offer a free service, providing independent advice.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published guidance for students and providers of student accommodation affected by the coronavirus. This sets out the CMA's view on how the law operates to help consumers understand their rights and help businesses treat their customers fairly.

Will I be able to claim a fee rebate for those weeks that I'm accessing my course online only?

Term start dates vary across universities and by course or year group.

Your university will communicate these dates with you directly. Teaching for most of the term planned but some courses will be online only for a period of time.

This may mean you may have some additional online learning at the start of term and in person teaching may be a little later than expected. However this is not a delay to the start of term and you should continue to access your education online from the date your studies are planned to resume.

We would encourage students to discuss any concerns they may have about their studies with their tutor at their university in the first instance. Universities have put in place a range of support measures and many have continued to provide immediate and customised support to offer a variety of learning online. Your university will ensure that your learning is not disrupted by the coronavirus and that in the new term and we have asked them to prioritise students whose courses require them to be on campus sooner rather than later.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the course, you should follow your university's complaints procedure. Universities will inform the outcome of a complaint, you can then refer to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

Can I move into my university accommodation?

We are asking students not to move to their term time address until in person learning resumes. Some students may need to move before then, but you should only move if it is absolutely necessary. This may be because you need to return to your term time address to resume a placement as part of your course, to complete research for your course, or for other reasons such as caring for others. Students in Wales may also be for medical reasons or you have no where else to stay.

If you live in university owned accommodation they will let you know when you can move back to your accommodation.

Under current measures, you are able to move home and this would include moving home to a term time address.

You should follow the advice on moving into shared accommodation from its address, you should not move into any other shared accommodation settings if any of the current tenants are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or self-isolating as a case or contact (this would not include laying low as part of the advice on student return to university). Students living in shared accommodation will need to make sure that this is the case. If a household or lettings agent is able to help you with this.

You should not move into an HMO or other shared accommodation settings if you yourself are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or have been asked to self-isolate as a case or contact. Students living in shared consider whether moving home into an HMO or other shared accommodation is appropriate based on your medical needs, and medical advice if necessary. You should also let your university and the people you share with know that you have been shielding.

Where a home move into an HMO or shared accommodation setting is necessary and other people already reside at the property, additional precautions are necessary:

- good respiratory hygiene practices should be followed, and you should avoid sharing bedrooms
- all hard surfaces should be cleaned with normal disinfectant especially high touch areas such as door handles, window handles, WC handles, taps, bannister and kitchen surfaces
- you should refer to the advice on cleaning and disinfection.

Testing

What is the objective of the mass testing programme?

The objective is to support as many students as possible to return to their term time address in the new term with a greater confidence of the risk they may or may not pose to those they live with.

In addition staff at universities are able to access the testing

How will this work?

- We will ask students and staff across Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs).
- We will aim to test individuals twice with a 3 day gap between tests. In between tests, universities will ask students to lay low.
- Students and staff who test positive LFD result they will need to immediately isolate at university in accordance with current guidance
- Students and staff testing positive will be advised to undertake a confirmatory PCR test through the usual symptomatic testing channels.

Where will the testing take place?

- Testing will take place on campus. Universities are providing the facilities, staff and logistical support.
- Test kits, PPE and other supplies will be provided to the Universities by the Department for Health and Social Care from the UK Government in partnership with the Welsh Government.
- Those who will vary in size and test capacity - the anticipate that some universities will set up centres, while others will set up pop ups.
- Some universities will provide their own testing or testing in partnership with other universities.

How many students do you expect to test?

All students should get tested if they travelled home for the holiday. We need to focus on those students who attend university away from their home towns (non-commuting students) because they will from the majority of students at the start of term and will be in accommodation in contact groups.

The virus spreads when people mix, and this means there is an increased risk of moving the virus around if they live in a shared and potential to transfer the virus between their home and university community.

There should also be a focus on students and staff who are vulnerable, or live with someone vulnerable to COVID-19.

Is this programme mandatory?

No. This is a voluntary programme for universities, students and staff.

We hope students will see this as the best way to keep their families, friends and university community safe and as a way to support them to stay on campus safely and to help in-person teaching continue.

What is the benefit of participation for universities?

Testing will help spot cases of Covid in those people moving around the country quickly and help stop the spread by breaking the chains of transmission.

We want to give students and staff confidence to continue in person learning and to keep their families, friends and community safe. We are approaching testing can work in the community and we will be able to learn how testing can support us in tackling the spread of the virus.

We will be looking at how testing at our universities can be managed in the longer term. Testing will need to support our universities, students, staff, communities and the wider community in response to the pandemic.

How will we engage with students and encourage them to participate?

Student and staff engagement is critical to programme success. We will provide tools and resources to support participating universities in communications about testing and ensure consistency with national messages.

What happens if I receive a positive test result?

If you receive a positive Lateral Flow Device Test (LFD) result you will be advised to immediately self-isolate.

We recommend that you get in touch with anyone you have been in close contact with and advise them to self-isolate. Let them know that they should self-isolate until 10 days after their most recent close contact.

You should let your university know you have a positive LFD test so they can help with online learning and help you self-isolate safely.

You should book a confirmatory PCR test. If you receive a positive PCR result your contacts will be traced by NHS Test, Trace, Protect.

If you receive a negative PCR test please inform your contacts that they can stop self-isolating.

Do close contacts of a positive LFD result still have to self-isolate?

Yes. In Wales contacts of individuals who have tested positive through the lateral flow test should self-isolate in line with national regulations.

Students who test positive with the lateral flow test should inform their university and should let anyone they have been in close contact with (in the last 2 days) know and advise them to self-isolate. Close contacts should self-isolate until 10 days after the last close contact with the person who tested positive.

Students who test positive using the lateral flow test will also be asked to take an NHS Covid test (known as PCR tests) as well.

If the PCR result is positive (and we are confident that it is not) close contacts will be traced by NHS Test, Trace, Protect.

If the PCR test is negative the student will need to inform the university and let their close contacts know that they can stop self-isolating.

What about the risk of forming large bubbles and locking up students in halls of residence?

Students living in shared accommodation will either be in a household or in a contact group. We have asked universities and accommodation providers to make it clear to students who are in their contact group and to make it easy for them to keep their contacts to a minimum and to avoid facilities.

If you share facilities like a kitchen and bathroom then this will increase the risk of contacting the virus if someone else also uses those facilities.

We have asked students to be very careful in the new term to limit their accommodation to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. If you have followed these rules, you should be in a contact tracing bubble and they will be able to decide if you are a close contact.

Testing all students on return will help to keep the cycle of repeat periods of self-isolation as we hope it can stop the chains of transmission and keep the university community safe.

Any student who tests positive or shows symptoms will have to isolate and will be asked to inform their university. The university will then advise your contacts and avoid mixing with people and other students in your accommodation have all had two tests, you reduce the risk of being a close contact.

We have asked our universities to make sure they can support students who need to self-isolate. It is important that students self-isolating during this period contacts their student services team so they can be offered support.

Support might include food deliveries, laundry services, buddy calls or online social events, mental health support and other pastoral activities. If you are worried about someone who you know is self-isolating you should contact the university directly.

Who will cover the cost of this testing?

Students and staff do not need to pay for a test.

This is a UK Government pilot and the UK Government is funding the activity, supported by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales. Universities will need to undertake reasonable activities to keep their staff and some additional cost to universities for agreeing to take part in the pilot.

Have LFDs been validated?

We are confident that these tests are right for this use case.

A positive test result is 99.7% accurate, so we are confident that the test are as accurate as possible.

We know that there is small chance that a test may return a false negative, and that is why we recommend taking two tests. In addition we know that the test may not pick up every case, but this is a stepping-stone step because an individual who has a false virus and are less infectious. We are also suggesting students take extra care to reduce their contacts before or after they return home as a test is not accurate for the point in time. It does not stop you from becoming infected after the test.

Are you going to start testing like this at all universities?

All our universities in Wales have agreed to offer asymptomatic testing, either as part of the mass pilot or through other arrangements.

Some universities in Wales are using their own asymptomatic testing and this will vary depending on the university.

There are many people in this country who need a test – why are you testing university students instead of other categories?

This pilot and roll out of mass asymptomatic testing uses a different approach to the NHS and its impact on the availability of the overall NHS test (PCR test).

We are using all of the technology and innovations at our disposal and are exploring and introducing new types of testing to identify people without symptoms to allow regular checking on whether they have the virus. These will be quick and simple tests designed to use and will help identify people with the virus who may not have otherwise been identified as asymptomatic and transmitting the virus to others in their close place to another. We want to test the rollout of the asymptomatic testing will help us identify any person who has the virus, and will help us to understand how it is spreading in our society. We are also using the opportunity to learn how we can best undertake appropriate self-isolation to help reduce transmission.

People are showing symptoms, they should follow the standard government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through gov.uk.

Can students refuse the tests?

Tests are not compulsory but will be an important tool to help students to protect themselves, their friends, family and wider community.

In the new term those students who choose not to take a test will be asked to lay low. 10 days instead of the 5 days for those who do university accommodation. This is because they will pose a risk to everyone they live with and we need to be able to reduce the risk of transmission.

Will students be legally required to take a test to return to university in the new term?

No, it is not a legal requirement but will be an important tool to help students to protect themselves, their friends, family and community.

However, anyone who experiences COVID19 symptoms should follow the standard government guidance, including self-isolating immediately and booking a test through gov.uk.

What is our current policy for testing students? Who owns the policy? Is it likely to change according to the infection rate?

This policy is owned by Welsh Government. We will be looking at how testing at our universities can be managed in the longer term. Testing will need to support our universities, students, staff, communities and the wider community in response to the pandemic. We will continue monitoring the situation and following Public Health Wales advice, adapting policies to best support students and providers.

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