



Date: 15 June 2021

Dear Colleague

The Higher Education (HE) COVID 19 Asymptomatic Testing Programme

I am writing to set out the next steps for COVID-19 asymptomatic testing in Higher Education into the summer. As you will be aware, the Prime Minister has announced that Step 4 of the roadmap will be postponed, and the current restrictions extended until at least 19 July. We continue to work towards defeating the virus and the easing of the remaining restrictions so that as higher education providers, following Step 4 of the roadmap, you can design your provision based on the best teaching and learning approaches, with no restrictions on in person provision. Alongside this, the HE testing programme will be extended **until at least 31 July 2021**. This will enable those HE providers who wish to continue to offer regular asymptomatic LFD testing to students and staff via either on-site testing facilities or home testing, to continue to do so. Officials will agree and inform you of the cost recovery arrangements for providers wishing to continue operating asymptomatic testing sites (ATS).

Please encourage all students accessing university facilities, or residing in term-time accommodation, and all staff to participate in the testing programme, get tested twice weekly and then report the results. This is particularly important in areas of higher COVID-19 prevalence, and I would encourage you to engage with public health teams where enhanced response measures are in place in your area. For students who have yet to leave their term-time accommodation, please encourage them to test before they travel away from university for the summer break.

Testing arrangements for August and September are being considered and guidance will be communicated in the coming weeks. Decisions about ongoing regular asymptomatic testing will be made in light of public health advice and government decisions on the easing of restrictions. I recommend that you have contingency plans in place to test students as they return for the Autumn term.

I am delighted to see the progress that the vaccination programme is making and the Government is on track to offer a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination to all adults by 19 July. Millions of people are already benefiting from protection from the virus, and this has contributed to falls in infections, hospitalisations and deaths.

I know that soon, more of the student population will become eligible to receive their first dose and would ask for your support in encouraging students to take up the offer to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. We will soon be distributing FAQs on student

vaccinations to help you disseminate key information to students and to reassure students that there will be flexibility in where they receive their vaccinations, even if they have moved home between doses.

Please contact HE.COVIDPLANNING@education.gov.uk should you require any further information about the testing plans for summer and September.

I am aware of the considerable efforts taken by HE providers in establishing and maintaining testing arrangements and would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities