Dear students,

In response to an increase in confirmed cases of Covid-19 in North East England, leaders of seven North East local authorities, known as the LA7, have come together to take the unprecedented step of seeking greater controls from Government to introduce stricter Covid-19 prevention measures to protect residents, communities, and businesses.

These measures have now been approved and announced by Government and will come into effect as of **00:01am on Friday 18 September 2020.**

We’re very much looking forward to welcoming you back to campus. While educational activities will carry on as planned, either face-to-face or online, we know that these further restrictions will impact on activities within your College and other aspects of the wider student experience.

This is obviously not what we would have hoped for, however, we very much support the need for the additional safety measures and the actions taken by the LA7. The health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and students remains our priority and we’ll do all we can to help local efforts to restrict the spread of the virus and avoid a full local lockdown.

**New restrictions**

The new restrictions, which are legally enforceable, include:

- Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens *(Please note that when you arrive in Durham you will form a new household with either those with whom you are sharing a house, or within your College. We will provide further information on this next week.)*
- Hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only
- Late night restriction of operating hours will be introduced, with leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10pm to 5am.

Residents are also advised to adhere to the following guidance to further reduce rates of infection:

- Not to socialise with other people outside of their own households in all public venues
- Only to use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work
- Take holidays only within your own household or support bubble
- Avoid attending amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators.

Please note, these restrictions apply to social settings only, not educational settings. Face-to-face teaching will therefore continue where scheduled in a Covid-secure environment.

As soon as we are able, we will provide you with a link to where you can get more information, including the full list of restrictions and detailed FAQs.

**Where the restrictions apply**
The restrictions will apply across Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, and Sunderland.
How long the restrictions will apply
The impact of the new measures will be monitored closely and reviewed on a weekly basis. The next steps will depend on the impact the measures have.

Conclusion
We’re working at pace to review and amend our plans as necessary for the safe return to campus across our research, education and wider student experience operations in light of this new legislation.

We’ve not yet received the regulations outlining the advice, guidance and legislation in full. We’ll provide further guidance on what these restrictions mean for our staff and students as soon as possible and will continue to update you regularly.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact coronavirus.information@durham.ac.uk.

Please continue to follow guidance on hand sanitisation, face coverings and social distancing to help limit the spread of the virus. By working together, we can maintain a healthy community.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes,

Claire O'Malley
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)