At the end of last week, we published our Outbreak Response Plan, as required by the UK Government Department for Education. Below you can read more about what the Plan is for and what it covers. The full plan can be found on our web pages.

What is the Outbreak Response Plan?

The Plan outlines the process, roles, responsibilities and terms of reference for responding to clusters or outbreaks of Covid-19 that might adversely impact upon students, staff, operations or the local community. The UK Government Department for Education has made creating an Outbreak Response Plan a key requirement in permitting universities to operate for the 2020/21 academic year.

Who wrote the Outbreak Response Plan?

We developed the Plan in consultation with Durham County Council’s Public Health Team. It’s intended to complement the Council’s Local Outbreak Management Plan and has been approved by the Public Health Team and by the UK Government Department for Education.

How is the Outbreak Response Plan being kept up to date?

The Plan is intended to provide guidance and to be flexible so that it can be adapted for different scenarios. However, it is being continually reviewed and updated by colleagues.
What is in the Outbreak Response Plan?
The Plan gives details of mitigation measures which are in place to reduce risk.
These include:

- a ‘Five Test model’ for opening buildings
- conducting higher risk activities such as large group lectures online
- enhanced cleaning
- provision of hand sanitiser
- use of face coverings, including in face-to-face teaching sessions,
- clear signage and induction materials so that as staff and students you know what’s expected of you.

The Plan also details: what would trigger a response to a cluster or outbreak; how an Outbreak Control Team would operate; and how the University and Public Health England would communicate between organisations.

It outlines the role of our Incident Control Centre (ICC) in an outbreak, which could include operating 24 hours-a-day; and how students and staff should report having Covid-19 symptoms.

How would the Outbreak Response Plan be invoked?
The Plan includes details of how it should be invoked, if needed, both in core operating hours and out of hours. In both scenarios, an Outbreak Control Team would be established, including representatives from key areas across the University and the relevant external agencies.

How does the Outbreak Response Plan consider different scenarios?
The Plan is intended to provide guidance and is flexible enough to be adapted to different scenarios. It includes an Outbreak Response Matrix, which considers six potential scenarios:

- No clusters detected
- A cluster or outbreak affecting a corridor, a block within a College or a household of students living out
- A cluster or outbreak affecting a whole College
- A cluster or outbreak affecting a whole Department
- A local lockdown affecting the whole campus and local area
- Transition out of a lockdown.

For each of the scenarios, the appropriate response is detailed for: Human Resources and staff welfare, student welfare, College operations, student events, groups and gatherings, teaching, central operations, research, communications and Library services.
What's the difference between the Outbreak Response Plan and the Campus Management Plan?

Our Covid-19 Campus Management Plan details how we’re reducing the risk of coronavirus spreading on campus, i.e. what preventative measures are in place.

The Outbreak Response Plan details how we’ll deal with any clusters or outbreaks of Covid-19 on campus, i.e. what responsive measures we’ll take.

What's the difference between an isolated case, a cluster and an outbreak?

**Isolated case**

When there is only one individual who has tested positive for Covid-19 or has symptoms, and no one else from their household, shared accommodation, or a non-residential location they have been (e.g. a workplace or teaching activity), has symptoms within 14 days, this is classed as an isolated case.

**Cluster (non-residential)**

When two or more people test positive for Covid-19 or have symptoms within 14 days of being in a non-residential setting, (e.g. a workplace or teaching activity), and have not been in direct contact with other people (less than two metres face-to-face or more than 15 minutes with them at a two metre distance), this is defined as a cluster. The cluster will end when there are no further confirmed cases 14 days after the first positive case was recorded in that location.

**Outbreak (non-residential)**
When two or more people test positive for Covid-19 or have symptoms within 14 days of being in a non-residential setting, and they have been in direct contact with other people (less than two metres face-to-face or more than 15 minutes with them at a two metre distance), this is classed as an outbreak.

The outbreak will be classed as over when there are no confirmed tested cases for Covid-19 or others with symptoms for 28 days after the first positive case was recorded in that location.

**Outbreak (residential)**

When two or more people from the same household or residential building, such as shared accommodation, test positive for Covid-19 or have symptoms within 14 days of being in contact with people from that household or building, this is classed as an outbreak. The outbreak will only end when there are no further confirmed cases in the household or building 14 days after the first positive case or symptoms were recorded.

**Useful links and contacts**

You can find out more about how we’re managing Covid-19 and preparing for the return to campus on our [coronavirus web pages](#).

To report symptoms or a positive test, please follow the procedures set out on the [Your Actions, Your University web page](#).

If you need to contact the Covid-19 Incident Control Centre (ICC), please call on [0191 334 0000](#) or send an email. The ICC is operating 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. Outside of these hours, the telephone will be answered by Security.