

Draft

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**ACTION POINTS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020 TO DISCUSS HEALTH AND SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

Present: Mrs D Dyker (Convener), Dr A Anarson, Professor D Anderson, Mrs L Benvie, Ms S Blaney, Mr S Carle, Dr N Curtis, Mr A Donaldson, Dr R Ebel, Mr G Fisher, Ms Louise Henrad (AUSA), Mr D Malcolm, Professor I McEwan, Dr A Petrie, Mr R Philp, Dr S Pugh, Mr K Smith, Mr E Stephen, Mr S Styles, Mrs J Walker, Mrs T White, Mrs D Wilson and Mrs V Amakiri (Clerk).

Apologies: Ms E Cassidy, Professor P Fowler, Mrs C Lawie, Ms I Scott, Mrs K Smith.

Item	Title	Responsible Person	Date
1	<p><b>Asymptomatic Testing And Wastewater Sampling</b> Dr Pugh introduced her paper to the Committee regarding wastewater &amp; asymptomatic testing. The Convener invited questions from the members and as there were no questions from the Committee, the Convenor suggested that the paper go to CPG for further considerations. Dr Pugh further requested that the Committee gave a view / vote and this was supported by Mr Styles. Mr Fisher requested clarification on what the vote was for as he had concerns about some of the contents of the paper. Dr Pugh confirmed that she wanted that the committee to approve the approaches and recommendations contained within the paper. Following Mr Styles, request to share his concerns, Mr Fisher stated that waste water sampling research was still ongoing, protocols were not standardised, ethical concerns regarding positive results and all persons to be tested. Prof Anderson stated that he was aware that SEPA was already carrying out testing and would then alert NHSG if there was a noticable spike. Mrs Dyker informed the Committee that this had already been discussed with Public Health Scotland and they share Mr Fisher's view. Discussions were ongoing with ScotGov regarding asymptomatic testing. Dr Pugh stated that she did not consider that there were any ethical quandaries and that students would welcome testing. Mr Donaldson questioned which buildings (whether academic or halls of residencies) were proposed to have the waste water testing carried out. Dr Pugh confirmed that it was mainly halls of residence but other buildings would be included. Mr Styles highlighted that confidentiality was very important and it was not possible to identify individuals from wastewater sampling, so not particularly relevant here. Prof McEwan raised a number of points – saliva tests were good if accurate and noted that it would be good to see peer review of saliva tests, there was no evidence of person to person transfer of virus and this suggests that the controls in place are working, therefore he wonders of need for these controls if not taken at national level. Mrs Dyker confirmed that there was no evidence of transmission in our learning environment.</p>		

	<p>Mr Styles informed the Committee that he had several tutees who had been tracked &amp; traced. This led to detailed discussions on asymptomatic testing. Mrs Dyker informed the Committee that there were 278 positive cases in the whole student population and that the University was working very closely with experts and the Incident Management Team to undertake proper testing and tracking and if any issues arise or there is evidence of transfer, colleagues would have to be notified. Mrs Dyker requested that the Committee members vote by 'Team hands' to determine if the recommendations of the paper would go to CPG. Seven hands were raised, the Committee was not supportive of the recommendations and the paper will not go to CPG.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Post meeting notes:</b></p> <p>Mrs Dyker contacted colleagues at Public Health to ensure that she had the full facts in relation to why waste water testing is not supported at this stage and confirmed the following information.</p> <p><i>NHS Grampian Health Protection Team do not recommend the testing of waste water for SARS-CoV-2 for the public health management of the pandemic. This approach has not been validated for such a purpose and the interpretation of results is challenging. Available data suggests that a proportion of infected individuals will shed SARS-CoV-2 in their faeces and this can then be detected in wastewater. However, the proportion who shed the virus in their faeces may be as low as 50-60% leading to a risk of false reassurance in settings where no virus is detected. It is also unclear for how long the virus can be shed in faeces with reports of shedding for more than a month post-infection. In a population where cases have already been present, this provides a challenge in attempting to interpret what may be new infection versus post-infection shedding. Wastewater testing as a means of community surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 infection is being trialled in a number of settings in the UK, though for understanding of the prevalence in particular areas, rather than for public health intervention. We will be guided by Public Health Scotland if evidence is forthcoming that suggests that waste water testing will be a useful tool to complement the Test and Protect programme and national restrictions as a public health intervention.</i></p>		
2	<p><b>Update On The Outbreak And Data</b> (see <a href="#">link</a>)</p> <p>Mr Fisher informed Committee that there was approx. 1 new case per day at present. Students in self-isolation dropped from approximately 500 at it's peak to 20. Mrs Dyker indicated that the next area of concern will be the Christmas break and the return of students after the break.</p>		

	<p><b>Recent issues to update</b></p> <p><b>Recent change to face coverings guidance</b> (see <a href="#">link</a>)  Mr Fisher informed the Committee of the change in face coverings guidance and now staff were required to wear face coverings anywhere in building unless it was in single occupancy offices or whilst eating and PPE requirements may supercede this guidance. He informed the Committee that the University had been ahead of government in making this change to the guidance.</p> <p><b>Study &amp; Social space update.</b> Mr Donaldson informed committee that these were being monitored The Library was open to students and SDRL was reaching capacity, it's busiest times were between 12pm and 2.30pm, Taylor Library was under capacity and it was similar at Polwarth. He reported that bookable study spaces were underutilised. Requirements around spaces for students who needed to be on campus for longer were being developed and issues regarding the management of this was being considered. Mrs Dyker indicated that as Aberdeen was at Level 2 of the ScotGov restrictions, the University might have the flexibility to enhance student experience / spaces for them. She also requested a name change from 'Social Space' to 'Quiet Space', so as not to give the wrong impression to students. Ms Blaney queried whether there was an update on informal study spaces in Zoology building to which Mr Donaldson replied that there was none. Prof McEwan raised a concern over no provision for students in case of bad weather at the Foresterhill Campus. The Committee was informed that these were all being discussed at present</p> <p><b>Winter break.</b> There were discussions on-going with ScotGov about how this would look for the student population. ScotGov policy is to support students to return home for the Winter-break and their return in January, including enhanced testing. The University is actively engaged and will keep everyone updated when information becomes available.</p>		
3	<p><b>Teaching Risk Assessments</b> (see <a href="#">link</a>)  Mr Fisher expressed his thanks to all who were present and involved in uploading the risk assessments and requested that thanks were to be feedback to all involved that were not present. He also invited schools who have not uploaded, to please upload as &amp; when. The Committee was invited to note that there were no issues with SharePoint reported. Mr Fisher highlighted that it encouraged the sharing of good practice.</p>		

4	<p><b>Update On Reviews Of Risk Assessments For Occupied Buildings</b></p> <p>Mr Fisher reassured the Committee that building reoccupation risk assessments were being reviewed and buildings were being added when required.</p>		
5	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>Mrs Blaney raised a couple of queries from her Head of School –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clarification in respect of deep cleaning when a positive case has been identified. Mrs Dyker informed the Committee that the IMT will provide guidance informing if there is a need to deep clean, close buildings, enhance cleaning regimes, etc and the Head of School will be informed as soon as there is an incident.</li> <li>b. Query whether there was a way of recording or reporting near misses ie not following guidance and procedures. Mrs Dyker revealed that in cases where people not followed protocol, they have been managed by current staff or student processes.</li> </ul> <p>The Convener thanked attendees for their time and hoped that the Committee found these extra meetings useful.</p>		