CHECKLIST: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO SELF-ISOLATE

Universities UK

Self-isolation and regular testing are together key to containing the spread of COVID-19. Universities recognise that it can be challenging for students to self-isolate. This could be because of difficulties with their ongoing learning, problems with getting supplies or with their housing and finances, or with being able to access support for their health and wellbeing.

Universities may wish to use this checklist as a guide for supporting students who are self-isolating. The checklist can be used as a framework for individual universities to adapt to their own institutional settings and contexts. It covers a range of key issues to consider and should be read alongside relevant national and local guidance.

Communication

☐ Provide a COVID-19 contact where affected students can report symptoms, raise any other issues and seek support.

☐ Stay in regular, proactive and personal contact with students throughout their self-isolation period to encourage them to raise any issues or concerns and so you can identify those getting into difficulty. Check-in proactively with all members of a student household where some or all are self-isolating.

☐ Send regular updates to affected students, parents, wider staff and students and the wider community. Provide regular messages of reassurance about the support available if students have to self-isolate and encourage engagement in asymptomatic testing.

☐ Regularly provide informationabout how to access health, wellbeing and hardship support, including how to reach university support services and local NHS services. This should include information about temporary GP registration, and, if an option, how they register with the university health centre or GP.

COVID-19 information

☐ Make sure that students have access to and understand authorised COVID-19 advice and guidance including local and national rules. Highlight new guidance updates to students, especially when they need to change their behaviour.

☐ Encourage all students and staff to download the NHS app which provides, alongside its contact tracing function, clear guidance on symptoms and self-isolation.

☐ Offer further COVID-19 related health advice, available from NHS Choices or from the NHS-validated Coronavirus support app.

☐ Provide guidance on minimising transmission among the university community and within higher education settings, including student households.

Mental health and wellbeing

☐ Encourage students to use student wellbeing and mental health support services by clearly signposting these services.

☐ Carry out regular individual check-ins via phone, text, email or in person, using these to inform a register of students at risk needing further targeted interventions.

☐ Encourage students to disclose any pre-existing or current mental health issues or other health conditions.

☐ Work with students' unions to provide peer support and safe social interactions, alongside wider measures to support students to keep socially active and connected during self-isolation, for example through online activities offered by clubs and societies.

☐ Provide and signpost students to virtual events, activities and inclusive physical activity for entertainment, health and wellbeing.

☐ Signpost to Student Space guidance on staying well in self-isolation.

☐ Ask students if they would like family or friends involved in support for their mental health or other difficulties.

☐ Ensure that accommodation staff and student-facing professional service teams are trained in mental health awareness and can rapidly escalate any concerns.

☐ Refresh local partnerships with NHS and emergency services including exchange of key contacts and data sharing agreements.

Practical support

☐ Ensure students have access to a range of necessities during self-isolation, including:
  — food or food delivery services, where possible allowing for religious or dietary requirements
  — laundry services
  — cutlery and dishes
  — personal hygiene products
  — cleaning materials and bin bags, tissues and toilet rolls

  This might include a basic care package. Students may benefit from a list of local shops that deliver other food/meals.

☐ Ensure that key services are maintained – for example safe rubbish collection and internet services.

☐ Make sure that students have the technology and capability to access learning, including library services and learning support (such as access to personal tutoring) as well as social support and interaction. This should include making sure students know where they can seek timely advice if there are problems. Where possible, use feedback from students to improve services and support.

Make sure that students living off campus have, as far as practically possible, an equitable experience, including the level of personal contact and access to support services. Necessarily, support will vary depending on the needs of the individual student and whether those students are living at home, in university accommodation or in private halls or houses.

☐ Make sure there are processes in place to help students do what is immediately required of them during the self-isolation period. This includes:
— Applying for extenuating circumstances for academic work.
— International students will need to complete police registration and Biometric Residence Permit.

☐ Share guidance for safe and appropriate online behaviour.

Targeted support

☐ Ensure that students with declared disabilities have their specific needs supported.

☐ Make sure that cultural and religious observance is supported during self-isolation and consider the specific support needs of student from identified minority groups.

☐ Monitor students' engagement and academic performance to identify those who may be getting into difficulties. Reach out proactively to check on their wellbeing.

Partnership support

☐ Engage with private accommodation providers to help them understand the specific needs of students in self-isolation and, seeking consent from students, to share information about students' COVID-19 status.

☐ Work in close partnership with local public health authorities including Directors of Public Health and Health Protection Teams to inform decisions about testing, contact tracing, outbreak response and self-isolation.

☐ Agree communication updates with the local Director of Public Health and Health Protection Teams, where they are indicated by public health decisions.

Updated March 2021

In June 2020 Universities UK (UUK) published principles for universities to consider as they prepared for the new term. In August 2020 UUK launched self-isolation guidance specifically for international students arriving in the UK. Universities Scotland published a consistent core of care for students during the pandemic.

Contact covid-19@universitiesuk.ac.uk for further information.