



25 September 2020

Dear Directors of Public Health

We want to thank you again for all the hard work you're doing to help keep the nation safe and respond to the threat of COVID-19. As we are sure you will agree, few things are as important as the wellbeing of children and young people and we know that giving them access to safe and supportive education is critical to their current and future health. We know that the return to school for many has been met with challenges and we have sought, through our health protection teams and the development of an advice line, to ensure that we are offering education settings the support and advice they need. Keeping education settings open and functioning has to be top of our priority list.

Rightly, attention has moved to higher education institutions (HEIs) and how we keep students safe while they are there. We know that these settings are as complex as schools and we want to do all we can to ensure that you are as supported as possible over the coming weeks and months in helping them to manage the challenges that COVID-19 brings. We want to ensure that you have access to all the resources and best practice available.

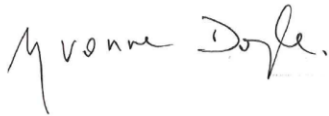
1. Please continue to work with HEIs in your area to ensure that they have completed their outbreak management plans for you to agree as per the letter sent by Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Universities on 8th September. These should be a helpful mechanism for HEI leaders to plan for outbreaks in their settings and for you to work with them to ensure they have worked through all possible scenarios
2. The outbreak management plans should be shared through your Local Outbreak Engagement Board and made publicly available
3. Reinforce to HEIs how they can access public health advice on complex situations from PHE – the best way to do this is via the local health protection team, details of which can be found [here](#)
4. Direct HEIs to the [Government](#) and [Universities UK](#) guidance on how to plan for a safe return of students and how to keep them protected while onsite
5. Ensure HEIs have access to the [DfE toolkit on comms and marketing](#) and can use the assets to reach their students and staff
6. Work with HEIs to ensure that staff and students know how to get tested if they have symptoms
7. Agreement on arrangements for contact tracing and the alignment with the NHS Test and Trace Programme
8. Work with HEIs to ensure that staff and students know where they can get advice and mental wellbeing support
9. Ensure leaders in HEIs have read the DfE and PHE best practice guide (attached to this letter) and discussed it with relevant members of their team

We will be holding a series of webinars to support HEIs and public health teams as they prepare for the return of students. For further details, please see the [Universities UK website](#).

ADPH is represented on a national group, alongside colleagues from DfE, the JBC, DHSC and UUK, which discusses work around university settings. If DsPH would like to feed any issues into these conversations, please contact policy@adph.org.uk.

We look forward to working closely with you throughout the upcoming winter season.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yvonne Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yvonne Doyle CB MD

Medical Director and Director for Health Protection

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. de Gruchy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy

President, Association of Directors of Public Health