**COVID-19- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR STAFF IN THE WORKPLACE**

**These were last updated in October 2022.**

 **Is the university continuing to assess the risk of COVID?**

The university continues to operate in line with the Government advice on living with COVID and is working to ensure that the necessary measures and precautions are being taken by individuals and the organisation to keep everyone safe.

As a university we will promote and encourage vaccine and booster take up in our community of staff and students.

We will continue to monitor infection rates in the university and local community, seeking advice through the local health protection board. Campus Shield (the local university network group and public health agencies) continues to meet on a regular basis.

We have an overarching institutional Covid risk assessment, which is a high level document that sets out how the university is managing the current Covid-19 situation and how the university will restrict the transmission of the Covid-19 virus in its varied workplaces. This document is currently under review.

**What measures does the university have in place to protect staff and students**Enhanced cleaning is now operational in high footfall areas using virucidal cleaning agents as standard.Fogging techniques can be deployed in the event of an outbreak.Sanitisers, antiviral wipes and face coverings are all freely available around the campus. Messages encouraging good hygiene and uptake of boosters will continue across the campus and periodically on digital screens.

**What if I test positive for COVID?**
In line with Government guidance, those who test positive should not come on campus for five days, following the day of the positive test result, avoiding contact with people at higher risk of serious illness for 10 days. The university will not require evidence of a positive test result.

Staff who are well enough to work should work from home and this should be recorded as self-isolation in staff infobase. Staff who are normally unable to work from home would be advised to stay at home but should discuss with their line manager whether there is different work that can be undertaken from home. If you are not well enough to work, this must be recorded as sickness absence due to COVID.

**What if I have symptoms of respiratory illness/ COVID?**

Those with any symptoms of respiratory illness and a high temperature who do not feel well, should not come on campus for five days. Individuals with mild respiratory illness symptoms, but no high temperature would be allowed to come onto campus. Measures such as social distancing and the wearing of face coverings would be encouraged in these circumstances.

Where you are advised to not come on campus but are well enough to work from home you should do so - this should be recorded as self-isolation in staff infobase. Staff who are normally unable to work from home would be advised to stay at home but should discuss with their line manager whether there is different work that can be undertaken from home. If you are not well enough to work, you must take the time to rest and recover and this would be recorded as sickness absence.

 **Do I still have to test to come into the workplace?**Staff are encouraged to test if they have symptoms of Covid. The university no longer has a licence to distribute test kits, but staff may claim a maximum of £15 per month on expenses if a personal test kit is purchased. This can be claimed through the normal expenses route and receipts will need to be attached to any claim.

**What if I have someone at home (or I have been in close contact with someone) with respiratory symptoms (including symptoms of COVID)?**
There are no longer any restrictions in place to attending the workplace in these circumstances.

**What if I have someone at home who tests positive for COVID?**
There are no longer any restrictions to attending the workplace in these circumstances but measures such as social distancing and the wearing of face coverings would be encouraged.

 **What if I have been in close contact with someone (either inside or outside work) who tests positive for COVID?**
There are no longer any restrictions to attending the workplace in these circumstances.
 **When should my manager record self-isolation or sickness in staff infobase?** It is important to ensure all absences from work are recorded correctly and promptly on staff infobase and it is proposed that sickness absence/reporting around respiratory illnesses including COVID-19 should be based on the following categories:

1. Respiratory illness symptoms, high temperature and too unwell to work – absence to be recorded as sickness absence, managed in line with the usual sickness absence process, and counting towards short term sickness absence trigger points.
2. Respiratory illness symptoms and high temperature, well enough to work - absence should be recorded as self-isolation and would not count towards sickness absence in terms of both sick pay or short term sickness absence trigger points.

**Does sickness absence due to COVID count towards the university absence triggers?**With effect from 1st May 2022, sickness absences linked to COVID will no longer be discounted from the LJMU sickness absence triggers.

**Can I claim back annual leave that has been approved if I am ill with COVID?**
In line with the Absence Procedure, any sickness absence (including sickness absence for COVID) that occurs whilst on annual leave will not be recorded as sickness absence (and therefore annual leave cannot be reimbursed) *unless* you inform your line manager at the start of the sickness and are able to produce a doctors note for the period in question. If a member of staff returns from annual leave and states they were sick whilst on annual leave but no notification was given at the time (and they cannot provide a doctors note) then this will not be regarded as sickness absence.

**Am I still required to wear a face covering in work or any other type of personal protective equipment?**
The university continues to recommend the wearing of face coverings in crowded or enclosed spaces, but this is now a personal choice.  **Should I be in the workplace if I have previously been classified by the NHS as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable?**

There is no separate guidance for people previously identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and you are advised to follow the same guidance as all staff on staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID, as well as any further advice received from your doctor.

**Should I be in the workplace if I am immunosuppressed?**We will continue to support those who are immunosuppressed (weakened immune system), to work from home where possible. Where this is not possible, a risk assessment must be undertaken by your line manager in order to see what arrangements can be made to reduce risk or to make reasonable adjustments. A referral can be made to the LJMU Occupational Health Team for staff who are compromised in order to obtain further advice if required.

**What if I am living with or caring for someone who has previously been advised by the government to shield because they are in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable’?**
All shielding restrictions have been lifted in accordance with government guidelines and you should be safe to attend the workplace.

**I am pregnant- is it safe for me to be in the workplace?**
The Government has changed its COVID-19 specific guidance for pregnant people. In line with current advice, an individual risk assessment ([SCP18 Risk assessment](https://policies.ljmu.ac.uk/UserHome/Policies/PolicyDisplay.aspx?&id=24&l=1)) should be completed for all pregnant members of staff by the line manager. The New and Expectant Mothers, [SCP33 code of practice](https://policies.ljmu.ac.uk/UserHome/Policies/PolicyDisplay.aspx?&id=409&l=1) should also be read and the checklist completed and returned to the SHE Department. Based on the outcomes of the risk assessment, there may be some circumstances where it is appropriate for the pregnant person to work from home, but for the majority of pregnant staff, it is anticipated that they will be able to attend the workplace. An OH referral may be made for pregnant staff who have an underlying health condition in order to seek further advice.