

To: All UG and PGT students

Date: Thursday 10 June

Subject: COVID-19 update #25: Your updated guide to COVID-19 testing in Reading

Dear students,

This message is being sent urgently to all students and we recognise that this may include some who have recently completed their studies. Please ignore this message if you are not a current University of Reading student.

In the last few weeks there have been several updates regarding testing for COVID-19, both on campus and in the local area, so we want to give you an overview to clarify what has been going on, and how this may affect you.

Surge PCR testing in the local area

Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) announced a period of extra testing (also known as 'surge testing') from Monday 7 to Sunday 20 June in response to an increase in cases in the local area. The surge testing aims to quickly identify early and non-symptomatic cases in order to prevent the spread of infection.

Everyone over the age of 12 who lives or works in the following areas is being asked by the government to take a free PCR test, even if you have had one or both doses of the vaccine:

- **Reading:** Postcode areas RG1 3, RG1 5, RG1 6, and RG1 7
- **Wokingham:** Bulmershe and Whitegates, Evendons, Norreys, and Wescott (a 'postcode finder' is [available on the WBC website](#) for you to use)

These areas include our London Road campus and some Halls of Residence: St George's, Wantage and Kendrick.

If you live, work or study in any of these areas, **we recommend that you participate in the testing.** In doing so, you will be helping protect our community and contributing to Public Health England's (PHE) understanding of the virus and the new variants.

A Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) is located at the Great Hall at our London Road campus and in [Car Park 7](#) on Whiteknights Campus.

You do not need to book one of these PCR tests, simply turn up. You can find out more about the testing times and locations on the [Reading Borough Council](#) or [Wokingham Borough Council](#) websites, depending on your area.

Free home lateral flow test kits available to collect on campus

All non-symptomatic students and colleagues on campus are **still strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test twice weekly**, to give extra reassurance that you are not carrying the virus.

As was the case at Christmas and Easter, **we particularly recommend you take a test before travelling home**, if you plan to do so for the summer break. Remember, 1 in 3 people do not display any symptoms and even if your family members have been vaccinated, some risk of infection still remains.

You can pick up a free pack of test kits from [our dedicated collection points at the Library Café and Park Eat](#), without having to book, and could even win a £10 catering voucher to use on campus.

So far, more than 500 people have collected a pack. Each one contains 7 test kits which you can self-administer at home, along with instructions of how to register your result.

Alternatively, you can also [order kits for home delivery or collect from a local pharmacy](#).

PCR testing for those with symptoms

If you have any of the main [symptoms of COVID-19](#), you must self-isolate immediately, book a [PCR test through the government website](#), and [let us know](#) so we can support you and those you live with.

Keeping our campus community safe

Following a [recent increase in COVID-19 cases in Halls](#), we worked closely with PHE to carry out targeted testing over the 4, 5 and 6 June, which has now ended. All students who need to self-isolate are being closely supported by our COVID-19 Case Management and COVID-19 Support & Behaviour teams.

We know that self-isolation, especially at this time of year and when restrictions are easing, is not easy, but the increase in cases serves as a timely reminder that we must not be complacent. As well as taking steps to participate in testing, as outlined above, please remember:

- If you test positive from any type of test (PCR or lateral flow), please [let us know](#) straight away so we can support you
- If you test positive, or are asked to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace, you are legally required to [self-isolate for the full specified number of days](#) and you can be fined if you do not do so
- If you are contacted by the COVID-19 Case Management Team and asked to self-isolate, please follow all their instructions to minimise the risk of transmission among your fellow students
- Make sure your contact details (term-time address and mobile phone number) are [up-to-date on RISIS](#) so we can help support you as quickly as possible if needed
- It is still very important to take the basic precautions – hands, face, space and fresh air – to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19

If you have any queries or concerns, for yourself or for a fellow student, you can contact our COVID-19 Support & Behaviour Team at any time at covid-support@reading.ac.uk.

Looking ahead

We know that the last 18 months have been challenging. We continue to be incredibly proud of how you have all responded to the restrictions and changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through your continued compassion, patience and vigilance, we have managed to keep cases relatively low, and far below the national average for higher education institutions.

As we wait to hear from the government whether restrictions in the UK will be further eased in the coming weeks, **it has never been more important to continue to do all we can to keep case numbers low**, to ensure this is possible.

Disappointingly, we have received some recent reports from members of the local community about large gatherings in student houses and elsewhere in the local area. We will investigate these and, where appropriate, we will take disciplinary action, such as issuing fines.

Please continue to treat your fellow students and our wider community with respect and follow all University guidance and government restrictions. Together, we can keep case numbers low and help ensure the government can take the next steps to lift restrictions safely.

Thank you for your understanding and support. If you have any queries, you can contact your Support Centre (or Henley Helpdesk or ISLI Admin Office), your Academic Tutor, or the [COVID-19 Support & Behaviour Team](#).

Best wishes,

Paddy

Dr Patricia ('Paddy') Woodman

Director of Student Services