

CYPE(5)-25-20 - Paper to note 2

Response from Bangor University

Re: Letter from Senedd CYPE Committee

Firstly may I apologise that this response from Bangor University is so late you will be aware that the Bangor area has been placed into a Health Exclusion Zone and therefore last week and the start of this week have been particularly busy. I have answered the questions below, but if you require further information please don't hesitate to come back to me.

The COVID-19 measures you have taken in relation to your own accommodation, and how you have worked with Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs) and private landlords (NB please refer to arrangements for both term and vacation periods);

Only en-suite accommodation is in use this year at Bangor University, all shared bathroom facility halls have been closed. Hand sanitizer points are available in all Halls, and appropriate social distancing signage has been installed. Cleaning of communal areas (corridors, stairwells, lifts, etc.) occurs 7 days a week and includes multiple cleans of touch points per day. The residential estate has three electrostatic disinfecting machines which are utilised in the communal areas. In addition, students have been provided with additional cleaning material in kitchens and are asked to keep communal areas clean at all times. In relation to university staff visiting flats for planned and reactive maintenance protocols have been put in place including PPE for staff, and the use of an advance questionnaire regarding Covid-free declarations. The Halls Offices/Receptions/Security lodges have all been reconfigured including physical screening to ensure the health and safety of both staff and students. The University is in communication with local private student halls and those private landlords that are registered with us to provide them with additional information in relation to Covid-secure practices.

How you intend to support – or have been supporting – all students (on and off-campus) who have needed to self-isolate, including how you would support large numbers self-isolating at the same time in a dignified manner (i.e. the provision of food and drink that meets dietary requirements, medicine, mental health support and other essentials);

All students who are self-isolating are provided with information on sources of support both from our Student Services department (including financial hardship and counselling support) and also external sources (such as online support platforms specifically for Covid-19 issues). We have a number of mechanisms in place for those who are isolating in halls, such as providing students with extra cleaning products and bin bags, systems for students to order food deliveries and also contacts for student support, including halls wardens, security staff and student support services. Urgent postal deliveries such as medicinal items and study supplies are being delivered where possible by the Halls and post room teams. Students who are self-isolating in the community are supported by the Students' Union to obtaining provisions and essential supplies. Our Coronavirus and Mental Health page aims to provide information and guidance to help maintain mental and physical health. To make sure students can access support wherever they are, all of Student Services will be available online to support students. In addition, students on campus will be able to book face-to-face appointments with Disability Advisers, Mental Health Advisers, Counsellors and a range of other Student Support staff.

The provision you have in place for identifying and addressing student hardship;

Please see answer to the question above, and in addition a means tested Digital Hardship Fund is available for new and returning students. This fund can provide means tested support for unexpected costs that students are unable to cover.

Your approach to working with students on COVID-19 measures and actions, including self-isolation;

We continue to update our student 'frequently asked questions' webpage with new information as it becomes available.

We have worked in partnership with Undeb Bangor (Students' Union) to develop a Covid Community Commitments for students. The Commitment outlines the expectations and responsibilities and the of the University, students and the Student's Union.

To keep students informed about any changes and developments that are taking place in the University, our Student Services team are sending regular bulletins to the student community. These bulletins will highlight important and useful information on Covid-19 and support available to students (booking a test, reporting a positive result, keeping safe, Student Support services etc). We have also provided students with further guidance on self-isolating for students living in Halls.

The University is working closely with local authorities, Public Health Wales and the local health board to monitor reported positive tests for Covid-19 within the student community. We have robust plans in place to respond to any concerning rise in cases including a bespoke Portal which assists us in managing our confirmed Covid positive cases. The local Contact Tracing team is working closely with the university to identify and notify students who have undertaken testing. A dedicated mailbox is monitored 7 days a week for correspondence and queries from students.

Students can also engage fully in the online elements of our social programmes such as Campus life and Students' Union events. We are also providing resources, so students are able to continue with their studies. We plan to make online content available for the whole year so if students are unable to be on campus due to Covid-19 they will still be able to continue their studies.

Students living in Halls signed up to a Covid Code of Conduct when they signed their contract and this is displayed on all Hall front doors. It's a reminder to abide by the regulations and to be a responsible part of the student community.

We are taking breaches of the regulations very seriously and will use our student disciplinary procedures where there is a need to do so both for students living in halls and in the community.

How you are working and integrating with the public health and civil contingencies machinery within your local authorities and local resilience fora (to include confirmation of whether you have on-campus testing facilities for students);

The University is represented on both the Gwynedd and Anglesey Incident Management Teams which currently meet frequently. The University has an onsite testing facility at Ysbyty Enfys for students.

How you have engaged – and are engaging – with the local population, in particular where you have campuses in rural local authorities;

In addition to representation on the Gwynedd and Anglesey IMT and partnership working on communications we are posting updates on our social media platforms of the measures which the University is taking in relation to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our University community and the local community. We are also meeting this week with both local and county councillors to brief them on the steps we are taking.

Once again please accept my sincere apologies for the lateness of this response.

Kind regards,