

24 June 2020

Dear Ms Jobson,

Thank you for your correspondence on this issue.

I can confirm that my University colleagues and I have made it repeatedly clear throughout the pandemic that the safety of our students, staff and the communities that we are part of remains our highest priority. Although the Academic term has now ended, we continue to communicate weekly with all of our students to remind them of their responsibilities and to urge them to follow all Government guidelines.

We will continue to communicate with our students to ensure they understand the guidance and to impress upon them the need to respect their neighbours and to keep themselves and their community safe by following social distancing measures. This is critically important and we will continue to emphasise the necessary public safety measures to be followed by our staff and students wherever they are. I share here the detail of my message in this regard that we have issued today noting that this bulletin is sent to every member of our student community:

#### **CONSIDERATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

**Please remember if you return to your private rented accommodation that you are returning to communities that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and anxieties and concerns remain very high. This includes many elderly, frail and vulnerable people in these communities who are still shielding from the virus.**

**We know that the vast majority of students have been following COVID-19 guidance carefully but some have not and this has triggered concerns from local residents. The city councils and Devon and Cornwall Police continue to manage and proactively monitor and manage community adherence to official COVID-19 guidance and your health and safety and that of the wider community must be your top priority.**

**Please also remember what your responsibilities are as an important member of our community including care and consideration for your neighbours in terms of minimising noise levels, particularly when many people are now working from home or are isolating, and ensuring you dispose of rubbish and waste safely and quickly.**

As Government guidance is constantly adapting, and will change considerably on 4 July, we are also recommending you keep informed of official COVID-19 guidance, which is included on the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

If you have any questions or queries for the University's Community Liaison Team, please email [communitywardens@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:communitywardens@exeter.ac.uk)

I am sure you know that as of the 13<sup>th</sup> May, official Government guidance allowed individuals to move home if they could do so safely and whilst still following public health guidance. Some students have elected that their rented Exeter accommodation is their permanent home and living in rented accommodation does not mean an individual is not entitled to have that residence be their 'home'. Therefore students returning to their rented accommodation are not in fact breaching Government COVID guidelines as has been suggested.

Where the occupants of any household are found to be in breach of COVID social distancing regulations, the Police are empowered to take suitable action. We are in continuous contact with Devon and Cornwall Police and we support their measures to ensure that the guidelines are followed.

However, and as I am sure you know, we have no powers of enforcement with regard to COVID-related Government guidance off campus. We will make reports to Devon and Cornwall Police where we have confirmation of social distancing breaches and would support the deployment of fines and other enforcement measures where appropriate.

Where anti-social behaviour such as littering or excessive noise is reported, we will continue to contact households as we would do in normal circumstances, and we are grateful for residents help and support in identifying households where such behaviour needs to be challenged.

We will of course review the impacts of yesterday's announcement from the Prime Minister and if there are to be any further changes in national policy we will further reflect this in the guidance we provide. In addition, I am also planning to issue an update to the Exeter community about the role both our students and staff have taken to support their local communities and the NHS, as well as their contribution to research into finding effective therapies and testing for COVID during the crisis. I will also provide further details on how we are planning to manage the safe return to campus in September for the Autumn term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Shore-Nye'.

Mike Shore-Nye  
Registrar and Secretary