Introduction

This document is intended to provide Faculties and Professional Service Departments with information of the type of considerations and control measures which may be introduced to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission when hosting or conducting meetings. This document should be used to supplement existing activity risk assessments with the additional considerations required to identify and record the hazard of COVID-19. Staff, students and visitors has all have a role to play in helping to control the virus by taking personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. This document should be read in conjunction with the University's other guidance documents in respect of COVID-19, including the University's COVID-19 risk assessment, which are available at: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/covid/.

What is 'Close contact'?

A close contact is anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:

- face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a conversation within 1 metre;
- skin-to-skin physical contact for any length of time;
- contact within 1 metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact;
- contact within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (as a one-off contact, or added up together over 1 day);
- travelled in the same vehicle or a plane.

Where an interaction between 2 people has taken place through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen, this would not necessarily be considered as close contact, provided that there has been no other contact such as any of those indicated above.

Further information relating to contact tracing for close contacts is available at: https://gov.wales/contact-tracing-if-you-are-identified-close-contact.

General considerations when organising meetings

Meeting organisers are advised to consider the following option when organising meetings, based on business needs:

Option 1   Meeting to be conducted virtually or by telephone, avoiding in-person meetings.

Option 2   Hosting in-person meeting in an outdoor location with considerations for control measures identified in this document.

Option 3   Hosting in-person meeting in an indoor location with the necessary control measures with consideration for control measures identified in this document.

Pre-meeting information

It is the meeting organiser's responsibility to ensure that all participants receive relevant information in advance of their attendance. This can be achieved by including the information with the calendar or email invitation, and should include asking and encouraging attendees to not attend should they feel unwell, be experiencing any

COVID-19 related symptoms, have received confirmation of a positive test, and/or are awaiting test results, or are required to self-isolate as advised by NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect Services.

The three main recognised symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new continuous cough;
- a high temperature;
- a loss of or change to your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

Other prior communication should also include details of the control measures implemented and any actions required by attendees during the meeting, with consideration for the ability to apply the guidance included in this document.

Considerations for outdoors meetings

Undertaking activities outdoors instead of indoors is likely to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, due to the effectiveness of fresh air as a control measure. The University's grounds provide ample and beautiful spaces to undertake a range of activities in an outdoor environment. Meeting organisers should consider the following points when organising and hosting outdoor meetings:

- Prior to the meeting, attendees should be asked and encouraged to not attend should they feel unwell, be experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms, have received confirmation of a positive test, and/or are awaiting test results, or are required to self-isolate as advised by NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect Services.
- Consider minimising the number of attendees to as much as required, to reduce the levels of contact between individuals.
- Attempt to allow participants the opportunity to maintain physical distancing during the meeting should they wish to do so.
- Consider the type of conversation that needs to take place: does the discussion relate to confidential issues, including relating to identifiable individuals? If so, consider whether confidentiality can be maintained in the outdoor location.
- A walk and talk can allow physical distancing to be maintained. Consider the timing and location, avoid change over times for teaching and other busier periods on campus.
- Take account of attendees' fitness, accessibility requirements and weather forecast, for any outdoor meetings. Penglais Campus has a number of walking routes and outside seating areas that can be utilised.
- Encourage attendees to bring their own equipment and refreshments if required, to avoid sharing equipment and creating common touchpoints where possible.
- Consider a seating plan or seating configuration which maximises the available distancing between the expected number of attendees.
- Being able to identify attendees by keeping a record of attendees for at least 21 days can assist with contact tracing efforts where required.
- Limit the need for attendees to unduly raise their voices to each other. This may include refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting or at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult.

Considerations for indoor meetings

Meeting organisers should consider the following points when organising and hosting indoor meetings:

- Prior to the meeting, attendees should be asked and encouraged to not attend should they feel unwell, be experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms, have received confirmation of a positive test, and/or are awaiting test results, or are required to self-isolate as advised by NHS Wales Test, Trace, Protect Services.
- Ensure that meetings are hosted in suitable rooms with sufficient capacity to allow participants the opportunity to maintain physical distancing during the meeting should they wish to do so.
- Avoid exceeding the identified maximum capacity for any room. Consider minimising the number of attendees to as much as required, to reduce the levels of contact between individuals.
- Avoid arranging in person meetings that start and/or finish during teaching changeover periods or other busy times in the building where possible.
- Minimise the duration of meetings as much as possible, with consideration for time and workload management. Where meetings are expected to last for a prolonged period, facilitate regular break (a frequency relevant to the meeting length e.g. ten minutes over a two-hour meeting) which allow attendees to go outside for the room to ventilate.
- Wearing of face coverings in accordance with the University's Use of Face Covering Guidance: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/covid/#face-coverings.
- Open all windows within the venue to maximise ventilation and fresh air supply. Room doors can be kept open during the meeting to promote ventilation, provided that the nature of discussions, and associated confidentiality requirements, permit.
- Encourage attendees to bring their own equipment and refreshments, to avoid sharing equipment and creating common touchpoints where possible.
- Where refreshments are provided during the meeting, consider ways of reducing common touchpoints (such as providing pre- and individually-packaged refreshments, having a member of staff serving refreshments whilst following good hand hygiene practices) make hand sanitizer available at collection points, and stagger collection to minimize queuing.
- Encourage attendees sanitise or wash their hands before the meeting, and clean their work area (desk, chair, etc.) before and after use with the sanitising wipes provided.
- Consider a seating plan or room configuration which maximises the available distancing between the expected number of attendees.
- Ensure that venues are subject to regular serviced cleaning. To request a serviced clean of locations which are not included as part of regular cleaning regimes, please contact facilities@aber.ac.uk.
- Being able to identify attendees by keeping a record of attendees for at least 21 days can assist with contact tracing efforts where required.
- Limit the need for attendees to unduly raise their voices to each other. This may include refraining from playing music or broadcasts that may encourage shouting or at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult.

When utilising small meeting rooms and personal office spaces for conducting meetings, rooms should be well ventilated, with windows which can be opened to promote fresh air supply, and of suitable size to allow opportunity for some physical distancing between attendees.

Further Advice

G028 Use of Face Coverings Guidance: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/covid/#face-coverings.

G029 Use of Offices Guidance: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/covid/#use-of-offices.

Welsh Government Guidance: https://gov.wales/coronavirus.