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Subject: FAO: The Vice Chancellor

Date: 15 October 2020 at 11:53

To: chris.day@newcastle.ac.uk

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Dear Chris

I hope you are well.

I know that David Stewart has written to you outlining the view of our members, as expressed at our meeting yesterday. It may be helpful if I develop that somewhat.

Firstly, the meeting was very well attended and marked by both serious anxiety from our members but also unity as to the ways forward. The anxiety stems from the fact that f2f teaching could resume in a fortnight despite the university being third in terms of [the](#) percentage of university members affected by Covid-19 – behind only Northumbria and the Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts. Moreover, we still do not know which programmes and, therefore, which of our members will be required to work on the campus during the forthcoming period.

I read in the Guardian this morning that the government plan to instruct all universities to move to online learning only from early December to allow students to be able to return to their homes for Christmas. And whilst I am not sure of the mechanism whereby a government can instruct individual citizens they have to self-isolate irrespective of whether they have any contact with people who have got Coronavirus the fact is that the intention is not to have f2f teaching leading up to Christmas.

We have also learned that in addition to Independent Sage arguing for online only provision that has also been the position of the official Sage group for three weeks.

I was going to write to you asking for an urgent meeting but you have beaten me to it!

From that meeting we will be looking for:

1 the university confirming that it will be operating on an online teaching model until the end of this term at the earliest,

2 detail as to which programmes the university believes need to be taught in person,

3 arrangements for workplace inspections for these areas,

4 provision of information made by UCU safety reps in accordance with Brown Book regulations.

These are times of unparalleled seriousness where we do need to move forward together so I, sincerely, hope we can make progress when we meet. But I do need to state that this letter need to be interpreted as a formal failure to agree by UCU in

relation to the university's approach to the Covid crisis. Therefore, if we cannot agree the way forward on Monday I will need to move the union to a position where we are in formal trade dispute.

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