

Ulster Teachers' Union Conference 2022

C-19 Arrangements

Introduction

The Ulster Teachers' Union will host their Spring Conference on Thursday 31st March and Friday 1st April 2022 in the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle Co Down. The organisers have noted that the provisions of the Public Health (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 (as amended) have largely been repealed however the rates of infection for C-19 remain stubbornly high, and so would wish to implement appropriate arrangements to limit the spread of the virus at the Conference.

C-19

C-19 is a virus that can be passed from person to person by droplets propelled by coughing, sneezing etc, by direct contact with an infected person, or by touching communal surfaces that have been contaminated by an infected person. The virus cannot survive for more than 72 hours in the general environment and cannot be readily passed from person to person who are approximately 1 metre from one another in a period of less than 15 minutes. The virus can be killed by alcohol based sanitising products and by warm soapy water. The virus does not spread as easily in an outdoor environment, or a well-ventilated indoor environment, compared with a badly ventilated indoor environment.

Persons contracting the virus can be asymptomatic or may suffer to varying degrees from a variety of respiratory and other symptoms. The symptoms can have very severe consequences for some persons - generally elderly persons or persons with existing health issues.

A test (a PCR Test) has been developed for persons who exhibit symptoms associated with C-19. This involves swabs being taken from the mouth and nose of the person being tested and being forwarded to a laboratory for analysis. A positive result will confirm that the person has been infected by C-19 and they therefore should be producing antibodies. It may take a number of days for the result to be obtained.

A second test (a Rapid Lateral Flow Test) has been developed for persons not exhibiting symptoms associated with the virus. Again, swabs are taken from the mouth and nose of the persons and are tested using a kit provided. A negative result will indicate that the person is not carrying the virus and therefore cannot be infective and are unlikely to become infective for a period of 24 -72 hours (even if they were to be infected by the virus a short time following the test). A result is generally obtained within 15 - 20 minutes following the test being taken.

Vaccination Programmes commenced in Northern Ireland and in many western countries in late 2020. Vaccines have generally been offered to persons over 12 years of age. Vaccinated persons may still become infected by the virus however the symptoms are generally less serious than those that would be expected in an unvaccinated person, and they may still be able to, but are less likely to transmit the virus.

Ulster Teachers' Union Conference 2022

The Ulster Teachers' Union will host their 2022 Conference in the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle. Union officials have been liaising with the management at the Hotel in recent weeks regarding the operational arrangements and the safety arrangements including the arrangements to limit the spread of C-19.

As stated above, the legislative requirements to limit the spread of C-19 have recently been withdrawn and have been replaced by guidance however the management at the Hotel are continuing to implement a number of measures including the wearing of facemasks when moving inside of the premises, and the provision of sanitising units at key locations. Union officials have discussed the arrangements to promote ventilation in the rooms being utilised during the Conference with the management of the Hotel.

Union officials will arrive at the Hotel from mid-day on Thursday 31st March to prepare the rooms being used during the Conference. This will include locating exhibitors who will set up their stands on the fringe areas of some of the rooms. Delegates (and their families) will arrive from 4-00 pm. Family members may avail of the leisure facilities at the Hotel whilst the delegates will assemble in the Ball Room for a 'business session'.

Further 'business sessions' will be conducted in the Chandelier Room on Friday 1st April.

The 'business session' will close prior to 6-00 pm on the Friday when the delegates, guests, and family members (200 – 230 persons in total) will assemble in the Chandelier Room for the President's Dinner.

Delegates will leave the Hotel on the morning of Saturday 2nd of April.

The areas of the Hotel being used for the Conference include:

- The Ball Room – delegates will sit at banqueting tables, with the speakers located on a platform/ stage and exhibitors stands located on the fringe areas - it will also be used for the President's Dinner on the Friday evening,
- The Chandelier Room – this will be used for the Presidents Lunch'
- The Brunel Lounge – this will be used for delegates to relax following the 'business sessions',
- The Dining Room – this will be used for meals during the Conference,
- The Drawing Room – this will be used as an office area by Union Personnel.

Delegates and their families will utilise the bedrooms and the leisure facilities during the Conference Period.

The Union will maintain a register containing the names and contact details of all attendees at the Conference. The information will be made available to the Public Health Agency in the event of an outbreak of the virus associated with the event.

Measures to be implemented at the Conference as to limit the spread of C-19

Vaccination

The Ulster Teachers' Union will encourage all persons attending the Conference to be fully vaccinated, however the Union accept that some persons have issues regarding vaccination and thus may follow the advice given.

Symptoms

Persons exhibiting symptoms associated with C-19 (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, the loss or change to their sense of smell or taste etc.) will be requested not to attend the Conference and to follow Executive Advice.

Rapid Flow Tests

All attendees will be issued with Rapid Flow Test Kits and asked to undertake a Test on the Thursday prior to the Conference. Persons will be advised that they should only attend the Conference if the test taken produces a negative result.

Ventilation

The 'business sessions' will take place in the Ball Room. Although the natural ventilation to this area is limited there is an air management system delivering 'fresh air' into the room and extracting 'used air' from the room. The Union has requested that the management at the Hotel arrange for the system to be 'set' as to facilitate the maximum number of air changes per hour practicable during the 'business sessions'.

Delegates will also utilise the Chandelier Room, the Brunel Lounge, and the Dining Room during the Conference. These rooms all have openable windows and will be used to optimise ventilation in the respective areas.

Union officials will use the Drawing Room as an office area. This room also has openable windows that will be used to optimise ventilation.

Face Coverings

Delegates, Union Personnel, Exhibitors etc. will be required to wear appropriate face coverings whilst moving around the Hotel. The face coverings may be removed whilst seated at dining tables or whilst sitting during the Conference either at the 'business sessions' in the Ball Room, whilst dining in the Chandelier Room or Dining Room, or when relaxing in the Brunel Lounge.

Hotel Personnel may not be required wear face coverings at all times whilst working at the Conference.

Seating Arrangements

Delegates will be required to register upon entering and leaving the Ball Room during Conference business. They will be seated during the Thursday and Friday sessions with other members of their Branch. Delegates will be advised that they should limit changing seats during these sessions.

When delegates are speaking for, or against a motion that requires moving to and from the podium they should wear face coverings.

Fraternal guests will be allocated designated seats.

Social Distancing

Delegates will be seated at banqueting tables 1.8 meters in diameter whilst attending the 'business sessions' in the Ball Room. The seating arrangements will facilitate social distancing of 1 meter between delegates, and in excess of 2 meters for delegates facing one another across the tables.

The speakers will sit (facing the delegates) behind a table located on the platform/ stage to one end of the Ball Room. The speakers will sit at least one meter apart. They will sit approximately 4 meters from the first row of tables being occupied by the delegates. The speakers will use microphones connected to a PA system as to avoid having to 'raise their voices' and thus will minimise the aerosol emissions from their mouths being projected toward the delegates.

Similar arrangements will be in place in the Chandelier Room during the Presidents Dinner.

Delegates will be reminded that they should socially distance in the Brunel Lounge and in the Dining Room.

Sanitising

Sanitising units will be located at the entrance to the Hotel and at the entrances to the rooms being utilised at the Conference. There will also be bottles of sanitising gel placed at each of the tables within the Conference Rooms. Delegates will also be given individual bottles of

sanitising gel. Delegates will be periodically reminded that they should sanitise their hands on a regular basis and in particular prior to, and after using the welfare facilities.

Arrangements will be in place as to ensure that ‘frequent contact surfaces’ such as door handles are sanitised on a regular basis.

Where practicable equipment (such as microphones) will be used only by a designated person. Where this is not practicable arrangements will be in place to ensure that the equipment will be sanitised between users.

The President’s Chain of Office will be formally transferred from the ‘Sitting President’ to the ‘Incoming President’. The Chain of Office will be sanitised prior to the ‘hand over’. The ‘Siting President’ will either sanitise his hands or wear nitrile gloves prior to/ whilst transferring the Chain to the ‘Incoming President’. The Chain of Office will again be sanitised at the soonest available opportunity following the transfer.

Displaying Symptoms whist attending Conference

Should a member of staff, delegate or guest display symptoms associated with C-19 or obtain a positive result to a Rapid Flow Test during the period of the Conference they should contact an official of the Ulster Teachers’ Union via hotel reception. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that they can leave the accommodation in a safe manner.

Remaining ‘On-Site’

Delegates will be requested not to leave the Slieve Donard grounds during the period of the Conference.

C-19 - Risk Assessment

What are the	Who might be harmed	Controls Required	Additional Information	Actions	Actions by Who	Actions Underta
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Hazards					and When	ken (Yes/No)
Spread of C-19	Delegates, Speakers, Guests, Exhibitors, Personnel working in the Hotel, Secondary Contacts etc.	<p><u>‘Track and Trace Arrangements’</u></p> <p>The Union will keep a record of the names and contact details of all attendees. These will be made available to the Public Health Agency in the event of an investigation into an outbreak associated with the Conference.</p> <p><u>Vaccination</u></p> <p>The Union will advise delegates, guests etc. that they should be fully vaccinated prior to the Conference however the Union is aware that some may have reservations regarding the</p>	<p>A Vaccination Programme commenced in Northern Ireland in December 2020 with everyone over 12 having been offered a vaccine. A similar Programme is operational in Southern Ireland.</p>	<p><u>‘Track and Trace’</u></p> <p>Names and contact details of attendees to be recorded and made available to the Public Health Agency in the event of an outbreak associated with the Conference.</p> <p><u>Vaccination</u></p> <p>Attendees to be encouraged to be fully vaccinated prior to</p>	<p><u>Who</u></p> <p>Hotel Management and staff, UTU, Delegates, Guests, Exhibitors, Speakers etc.</p> <p><u>When</u></p> <p>Prior to and during the Conference</p>	<p>Arrangements in place</p>

		<p>process and may not follow the advice given.</p> <p><u>Rapid Flow Testing</u></p> <p>Rapid Flow Testing kits will be forwarded to delegates, guests etc. and they will be advised to take a Test on the Thursday morning, and only attend if a negative result is obtained.</p> <p><u>Ventilation</u></p> <p>The ‘business sessions’ of the Conference will be hosted in the Ball Room that has limited natural ventilation. ‘Fresh air’ is however drawn into the Ball Room and ‘used air’ is extracted via an Air Handling Unit.</p>		<p>the Conference.</p> <p><u>Ventilation</u></p> <p>The Union will confirm that the Air Handling Unit in the Ball Room will be optimised. The Union will ensure that windows in other Rooms being used at the Conference are opened as appropriate.</p> <p><u>Rapid Flow Testing</u></p> <p>The Union will</p>		
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		<p>The other Rooms being used at the Conference have openable windows that will provide natural ventilation.</p> <p><u>Wearing Face Coverings whilst inside of the Conference Venue</u></p> <p>Attendees will be required to wear face coverings whilst moving within the Conference Venue (other than attendees who are medically exempt).</p> <p><u>Social Distancing</u></p> <p>Attendees will be reminded that they should socially distance at the Conference.</p>		<p>provide Rapid Flow Testing Kits to all persons attending the Conference, and advise that tests should be taken on the Thursday morning prior to arrival at the Hotel, and that only persons obtaining a negative result should attend the Conference.</p> <p><u>Wearing of Face Coverings</u></p>		
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		<p>Seating in the Ball Room and in the Chandelier, Room will be formatted as to facilitate social distancing of at least 1 meter between attendees. The speakers on the stage will sit at least 1 meter from one another and approximately 4 meters from the delegates. Delegates will be reminded that they should socially distance when in the other rooms.</p> <p><u>Hand Sanitisation</u></p> <p>Sanitising Units will be provided at the entrance to the Hotel and at the entrances to the Rooms</p>		<p>The Union will provide supply of face coverings at the Conference and will advise and remind attendees that they should be used when moving about the Hotel.</p> <p><u>Social Distancing within Conference Rooms</u></p> <p>The Union will liaise with Hotel Management regarding seating arrangements.</p>		
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		<p>being used at the Conference.</p> <p>Containers of sanitiser will be located on the tables in the Ball Room and in the Chandelier Room.</p> <p>Attendees will be reminded that they should sanitise their hands on a regular basis.</p> <p><u>Contact Surface Sanitisation</u></p> <p>A contact surface sanitising regime is in place at the Hotel with identified contact surfaces being sanitised at appropriate intervals.</p> <p><u>Arrangements regarding 'Shared Equipment'</u></p>		<p><u>Exhibition Stands</u></p> <p>The location of the exhibition stands to be agreed between the Union, the Exhibitors as to provide 3 metres separation between each.</p> <p><u>Hand Sanitisation</u></p> <p>The Union/ Hotel to provide sanitising units/ bottles of sanitising gel at appropriate locations.</p>		
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		<p>Where practicable persons on the stage(s) will utilise a designated item of equipment – where this is not practicable the contact surfaces on each ‘shared item’ will be sanitised prior to and after use by each user.</p> <p><u>Exhibition Stands at the Conference Venue</u></p> <p>Exhibition stands at the Conference venue should be placed at least 3 metres apart – these stands can act as focal points and the ‘gap’ should facilitate social distancing.</p>		<p>Delegates will be provided with individual bottles of sanitising gel.</p> <p><u>Contact Surface Sanitisation</u></p> <p>Union to confirm arrangements with Hotel Operators. Shared equipment to be sanitised before and after each use.</p>		
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		<p><u>Adopting good C-19 practices at the Conference</u></p> <p>Attendees will be reminded that they should follow good C-19 practices when attending the Conference.</p>				
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The Control Measures identified will be reviewed prior to the Conference.

Paul Scott

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