

Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli
Principal and Vice Chancellor
University of Glasgow
University Avenue
Glasgow
G12 8QQ



Our Ref: EN/BD9490

25 September 2020

Dear Sir Anton,

COVID-19 Outbreak

My thanks for the updates on how the Covid-19 outbreaks at the University of Glasgow's halls of residence are being managed. As you know, Murano Street Student Village is a part of my constituency and a large number of other students are my constituents, both in private accommodation and other halls of residence.

I appreciate the need to act speedily to reduce the risk of further infection to other students in halls, but also to the wider community. I also appreciate the need for clarity of message. Therefore, urging all students to avoid pubs and other hospitality venues in the coming days is understandable.

However, I would urge the University of Glasgow to do two things. Firstly, I would urge you to be clear that many, many students do not stay in halls.

Many live in private flats alone or with friends, and many others live with their families. It is important to ensure that we do not suggest that all students are the same. Every student has their own unique circumstances and when blanket approaches are being taken to instructions made to them, it is vitally important to recognise this.

Secondly, whilst socialising in student halls will indeed have exacerbated the Covid infection rate to some extent, it is important to realise the reality of student living at places such as Murano Street. It takes only one student who already has Covid-19 arriving to live in a 12-room apartment for there to then be a high probability that others in their apartment will also become infected. We must therefore be careful to avoid any implication that all those contracting Covid-19 in halls have necessarily been behaving dangerously or socialising to excess.

Bob Doris MSP

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I have also heard from a small number of constituents around the Murano Street area asking for reassurances over the impact the cluster may have on them. I have of course sought to do this, but I am sure the University would wish to ensure that good community relations can continue by doing likewise.

On a related matter, I have seen the communications sent to students effectively requesting that they stay at home. Many are, of course, self-isolating for 14 days. In the communication I have received, it makes clear that support will be offered to students, but is not particularly clear as to how this will be offered. I did not notice any information in the University's two most recent emails to students which makes it clear how they can access that support. Support can, of course, include access to food and drink deliveries, but also signposting to mental health and counselling services for those who may need it. Given that many students will be new to the University and the city and may not know how to find support, I would ask for urgent additional information as to what support is available and how to access it.

Students are a valued part of our community. I neither wish them to be stigmatised nor unsafe and I would ask you to consider the matters raised in this letter. As always, I am always willing to assist constituents, whether they are students living in halls or elsewhere, or whether they are members of the wider community living nearby. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Doris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Doris MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn (SNP)