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**Sent:** 02 February 2021 12:41

**To:** All Staff <[AllStaff@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:AllStaff@bournemouth.ac.uk)>



Dear colleague

### **Time to reflect**

The new year is usually an opportunity to look forward with optimism and new energy, but we have had a very busy and challenging start to the year.

We recognise the continued demands on those of you who are juggling caring responsibilities, home schooling and work or those of you dealing with isolation or other issues caused by the pandemic. We continue to work collaboratively across BU to plan and support staff and students in these challenging circumstances. We have undertaken some work to reduce the level of demands on colleagues by postponing or changing some activities, and this is something that we will keep under review.

Jim and the Major Incident Group (MIG) will continue to keep you updated via the internal communications team as the national situation changes. You will have seen that the government has announced its formal review of the current restrictions on 22 February and we expect that there will be announcements after that about changes to the guidance on students returning to their accommodation and face-to-face activities. You can find all the updates from the MIG in [one place here](#).

To help inform our decision and actions in the coming months, please complete our [short staff survey](#) before it closes on 8 February. This survey has an emphasis on wellbeing.

I encourage you all to look at the [wellbeing resources on the intranet](#), including the new spotlights on wellbeing – the [first one is about mental health](#). Please make sure that you are looking after yourselves as well as others.

**BU2025**

We updated our BU2025 implementation plan in October, to simplify it and reflect our current priorities. You can read the new version [via the intranet here](#).

As part of our commitment to sustainability as set out in BU2025, we have set a target of achieving net zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030/31. Our new [Climate and Ecological Crisis Action Plan](#) sets out the plans to reduce emissions, as well as encouraging staff and students to become more sustainable in their everyday lives. We have set some new dates for our open virtual staff engagement sessions, and I look forward to meeting you at one of these soon, to discuss BU2025, or anything else. Please [sign up here](#) and we will invite you to a session over the next few months.

### **HE Policy announcements**

You will have seen that the government have published the [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#) white paper setting out their ambition for reform to the post-19 technical education and training landscape. The detailed proposals build on announcements about investment in further education and in skills training from the last two budgets and is now part of their “Build Back Better” response to the pandemic. As you know, regional partnership and partnership with employers and engagement with industry is one of our strengths at BU, so we are positive about the focus on local skills needs through the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Alongside these announcements the government announced a set of consultations on a range of matters including [changes to admissions arrangements](#) so that potentially offers or even applications could be delayed until after exam results are received in the summer. They also plan to consult on possible changes to the funding structure, including introducing a minimum entry requirement for students to qualify for student finance. We will be keeping all these proposals under review and respond to them as appropriate. You can read more about the government plans announced on 21 January in a [BU policy update here](#).

### **Partnership news**

I [have joined](#) the Board of University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (UHD) as an Associate Non-Executive Director as part of a reciprocal arrangement as the partnership develops between our two organisations. Dr Ruth Williamson, UHD’s Deputy Chief Medical Officer, has been appointed to Bournemouth University’s Senate. Both appointments are for an initial two-year period.

### **A month of celebration**

We are planning a series of short virtual celebration events for our 2020 graduates between 1 and 11 March. These do not replace the graduation ceremonies but will be an opportunity for our graduates to get together with each other and staff online and celebrate together in an informal virtual celebration. We are still hoping that we will be able in the future to hold a more formal event for these graduates. Graduation is one of my favourite times of the year, as I personally congratulate each graduate in person on their achievements and meet their family and friends. I am really looking forward to when we are able to do this again.

We are also planning a virtual VC staff awards event in March to replace the event we would usually have held in November. This year nominations for the 2020 VC staff awards took place over a longer period than usual and we had a large number of nominations, including many for

teams. Thank you to everyone who took time to nominate their colleagues, the nominations reflected the extraordinary year that we had and the huge difference that staff across BU have made to our BU community and the wider community. I will write to those nominated soon to congratulate you. I am pleased that this year, we can take advantage of having a virtual event to invite more guests, and we plan to invite everyone who was nominated for an award and the staff who nominated them. We hope that we will be able to have a positive and uplifting celebration. Watch out for more news about this in the coming weeks!

Best wishes

John Vinney  
Vice-Chancellor

Follow me on Twitter @VCJohnVinney

