

20th JANUARY

LEGISLATION

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

Coming into force: 20th January 2021

These Regulations make minor amendments to, and correct errors in, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020.

18th JANUARY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 4\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/49\)](#)

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to remove all countries, territories, regions and islands from the list of exempt places, in Sch.A1, from which passengers arriving in England are not required to self-isolate.

In Force 16 January 2021 , 18 January 2021s

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 3\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/47\)](#)

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020.

In Force 15 January 2021

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Pre-Departure Testing and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/38\)](#)

Pt 1 of these Regulations amends the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to introduce a requirement for persons travelling to England from outside the open borders area comprising the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland to possess a notification of a negative coronavirus test upon arrival in England or, if travelling on a shuttle service through the Channel Tunnel, upon presenting at immigration control at the Channel Tunnel shuttle terminal area in France. Pt 2 introduces requirements for persons operating commercial transport services for passengers travelling to England from outside the common travel area to ensure that passengers who arrive in England on such services have completed a Passenger Locator Form and possess notification of a negative test result.

In Force 15 January 2021, 1 February 2021.

GUIDANCE

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents](#)

Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration

17 January 2021

This is advice for visa customers and applicants in the UK, visa customers outside of the UK and British nationals overseas who need to apply for a passport affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus.

The UK closes all its quarantine-free travel corridors

Times, 16 January 2021

Prime Minister Boris Johnson suspended all of the UK's quarantine-free travel corridors indefinitely on 15 January 2021 amid mounting concern about new coronavirus variants. Everyone travelling to

the UK from 18 January 2021 will have to produce a negative coronavirus test taken within the previous 72 hours and go into immediate isolation for up to 10 days.

[Coronavirus: Financial impact on higher education - Briefing Paper](#)

House of Commons Library

15 January 2021

A House of Commons Library briefing paper on the potential impact, and associated Government support provided, in respect of the financial implications for universities of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in areas such as the loss of international students, losses in income from lower home student numbers, a drop in research work, and less revenue from accommodation, catering and conferencing.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 15 January 2021

Students: Fees and Charges

Taiwo Owatemi: [134193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will review the equity of the level of university tuition fees as a result of students no longer being able to access important inperson resources under lockdown.

Claire Hanna: [134248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing tuition fees for the 2020-21 year to compensate students for the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on their university studies and experience.

Michelle Donelan:

This has been a very difficult time for students, and the government is working with the sector to make sure all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. The Government's clear and stated expectation is that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students regardless of their background have the resources to study remotely. This is more important than ever at the moment with the vast majority of students studying solely online. Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees, up to a maximum of £9,250 for approved (fee cap) institutions. The Office for Students (OfS), as regulator for higher education (HE) providers in England, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both. The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of COVID-19 on teaching and learning and is regularly engaging with all registered providers. It is actively monitoring providers to ensure: that they maintain the quality of their provision; that it is accessible for all; and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change

throughout the year. The OfS is also following up directly with providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer

and requiring providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the provider and student. If students have concerns, there is a process in place. They should first raise their concerns with their university. If their concerns remain unresolved, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education to consider their complaint. The OIA website is available via the following link: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published guidance on consumer contracts, cancellation and refunds affected by COVID-19. This sets out the CMA's view on how the law operates to help consumers understand their rights and help businesses treat their customers fairly. This is available via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-aboutcancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronaviruscovid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds>.

The Office for Students has also published guidance on student consumer protection during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is available via the following link:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-and-consumer-protectionduring-coronavirus/>.

Overseas Students

Emma Hardy: [133136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the UK remains an attractive destination for education for international students.

Michelle Donelan:

The government remains clear that our world-leading universities, which thrive on being global institutions, are and will always be open to international students. This has been particularly evident since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, where the government has worked closely with the higher education sector to ensure existing rules and processes are as flexible as possible, so that international students wanting to study at UK universities remotely or in person, where appropriate under the current circumstances, can do so. This includes the ability to engage via distance learning and blended learning for the duration of the 2020/21 academic year, provided that students intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow.

The UK was one of the first countries to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak by introducing comprehensive immigration flexibility for international students and staff, and the government has implemented a number of concessions to assist visa holders in the UK who have been impacted by global travel and health restrictions. This has included offering extensions of visas for those whose leave expired and relaxing the rules on visa switching in the UK, as well as confirming that existing international students who have been studying by distance/blended learning will remain eligible to apply for the new graduate route. This will offer a non-extendable period of leave to stay and work in

the UK at any skill level for 2 years (3 for doctoral graduates), provided they are in the UK by 6 April 2021 and meet the other requirements of the route. The graduate route represents a significant improvement in our offer to international students and will help ensure our higher education sector

remains competitive internationally. In December 2020, the government also confirmed that students commencing a one-year Masters programme in January 2021 will remain eligible for the graduate route even if they are studying remotely, provided they enter the UK before 27 September 2021 and complete the final semester of their studies in the UK.

To further enhance the UK's reputation as an attractive study destination, the government launched the student route in October 2020. This route streamlines the immigration process for international students, improving student experience; allows for an extended 6-month application window for prospective students; and allows greater scope for international students to apply for further leave as a student or to switch into other routes from inside the UK (in-country switching). This, coupled with the graduate route, means the UK now has a world-class student visa offer befitting our world-class higher education sector. The picture is looking more positive now than it did in the summer when the higher education sector projected a large decline in international student numbers. Recent UCAS data shows that there has been a 11% increase in acceptances for non-UK full-time undergraduate applicants between 2019 and 2020, although this is dependent on ongoing developments in context of the global health situation.

We are doing our utmost to continue to attract and support international students as well as the sector during this unprecedented time. We continue to work with the sector, devolved administrations and posts overseas delivering a package of bespoke communications that directly targets international students, making clear our worldleading UK offer. As part of this communications activity, the government approved £1 million for the British Council-led Study UK campaign to help drive international student intake from 16 global markets and further promote the graduate route. Professor Sir Steve Smith, the UK's new International Education Champion who was appointed in the summer of 2020, will also assist in opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector, tackling international challenges such as attracting international students to both our schools and universities and helping to forge lasting global connections. The government has also committed to publish an International Education Strategy update (in early 2021), which will respond to the new context and challenges that are posed across all education settings.

14th JANUARY

GUIDANCE

[PHE announces results of study into naturally acquired immunity from coronavirus \(COVID 19\)](#)

Public Health England

14 January 2021

Public Health England (PHE) has published the results of a study indicating that infection from coronavirus (COVID 19) results in some naturally acquired immunity for at least five months.

[Court of Protection team at 39 Essex Chambers issues guidance notes on vaccination and testing for Covid-19 and mental capacity](#)

Local Government Lawyer, 13 January 2021 (Online edition)

The Court of Protection team at 39 Essex Chambers has published two rapid response guidance notes, covering mental capacity, vaccination and testing for Covid-19. The Chambers stressed that both notes were a general discussion, as opposed to legal advice on the facts of individual cases.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 13 January 2021

Students: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill: [131394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether students are exempt from the restrictions on travel between areas in different covid-19 tiers.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE institutions in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

To help bring the new variant under control and while the vaccine programme is rolled out, our aim is to minimise the number of students and staff returning to campuses and accessing university facilities. In practical terms, this means that students doing medical, clinical and healthcare related subjects, including nursing, social care, dentistry and veterinary studies are being prioritised and can return at the start of the spring term, as planned.

Those on teacher training courses and students who must complete externally accredited examinations, which cannot be completed remotely, can also return to in person teaching at the beginning of term. All other students should access learning online until at least mid-February and remain at their current address in line with national measures. Universities will tell students when to return for the spring term.

On an exceptional basis, universities should support students returning for other reasons (for example, students who do not have access to appropriate accommodation, facilities, studying space or who need to return for health reasons). In these circumstances, students may return to campus, but their courses should not resume face-to-face teaching.

Kate Osborne: [134608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional teaching support is available to university students during the January 2021 lockdown period while they do not have full access to their tutors; and what financial support students can access to compensate for lost income from part-time work.

Michelle Donelan:

Due to the national lockdown measures now in place, we must take further steps to reduce transmission, including by significantly reducing the number of students returning to university from their winter break accommodation, and limiting the number of people travelling to and from university facilities. We are now prioritising the return to face-to-face teaching for courses which are most important to be delivered in-person to support the pipeline of future key workers. All other courses should be delivered online until at least mid-February. Our aim is to minimise the number of students who return to university to access university facilities.

The government's clear and stated expectation is that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students regardless of their background have the resources to study remotely. This is more important than ever at the moment with the vast majority of students studying solely online.

The Office for Students (OfS), as regulator for higher education (HE) providers in England, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both.

The OfS has published guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality academic experience in the light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This sets out that providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students that is at least broadly equivalent to the provider's usual arrangements. The OfS will keep this guidance under review to ensure it remains relevant to the developing circumstances of the outbreak. The OfS is actively monitoring providers to ensure that they maintain the quality of their provision, that it is accessible for all and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year. The OfS is also following up directly with providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer and require providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

OfS capital grants can be used to address the needs of individual students for remote access to learning, teaching, assessment and the related services of a provider, for example through the provision of equipment or connectivity services, where students would not otherwise be able to secure these.

The government has also worked closely with the OfS to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds. Providers are able to use

OfS Student Premium funding worth approximately £256 million for this academic year towards student hardship funds. We are also currently making available up to

£20 million of additional hardship funding on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students.

Students with a part-time employment contract should also speak to their employer about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment.

Students: Fees and Charges

Grahame Morris: [134412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward proposals for a tuition fee rebate for students who have had to study remotely as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

This has been a very difficult time for students, and the government is working with the sector to make sure all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. The government's clear and stated expectation is that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources to study remotely. This is more important than ever now, with the vast majority of students studying solely online.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees, up to a maximum of £9,250 for approved (fee cap) institutions. The Office for Students (OfS), as regulator for higher education (HE) providers in England, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both. The OfS has published information for providers providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality academic experience. The OfS is actively monitoring providers to ensure: that they maintain the quality of their provision; that it is accessible for all; and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year.

Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the provider and student. If students have concerns, there is a process in place. They should first raise their concerns with their university. If their concerns remain unresolved, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

The OIA website is available via the following link: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published guidance on consumer contracts, cancellation and refunds affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. This sets out the CMA's view on how the law operates to help consumers understand their rights and help businesses treat their customers fairly. This is available via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-aboutcancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronaviruscovid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds>.

The OfS has also published guidance on student consumer protection during the COVID-19 outbreak which is available via the following link:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-and-consumer-protectionduring-coronavirus/>.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 12 January 2021

Coronavirus: Students

Hilary Benn: [132771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the spread of covid-19 of students returning to their university residences after Christmas 2020.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our higher education institutions during this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

On 7 January we published updated guidance on ‘Students returning to, and starting higher education, in Spring Term 2021’. This sets out that most students should not return to university and should study from their current residence, where possible, until at least mid-February. Only those students who are on courses which are most important to be delivered in-person, to support the pipeline of future key workers, should return to university as planned. Other students are being asked to stay where they are and access their learning online during the period of national restriction. These students should be able to return, on a staggered basis, once national restrictions are lifted. Further information on this guidance is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950367/Students_returning_to_and_starting_higher_education_in_Spring_Term_2021.pdf.

All students should be offered testing on their return to university and we strongly encourage them to take this up. Any returning student who chooses not to be tested should self-isolate for 10 days.

12th January

LEGISLATION

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2021](#)

Coming into force: 12th January 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020/568) (“the International Travel Regulations”) to remove the United Arab Emirates from the list of exempt countries and territories in Schedule A1 to the International Travel Regulations, from which passengers arriving in England are not required to self-isolate.

GUIDANCE

[UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

11 January 2021

A Department of Health and Social Care document details the UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan and how the Government will work with the NHS, devolved administrations, local councils and the armed forces to deliver the largest vaccination programme in British history. By 15 February 2021 the plan aims to have offered a first vaccine dose to everyone in the top four priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

[Chancellor provides economic update amid coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

HM Treasury

Published 11 January 2021

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, has provided to the House of Commons an economic update covering the significant fall in gross domestic product due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and how the government is attempting to combat it, as well as detailing key statistics.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 11 January 2021

Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Bill Esterson: [133815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the latest rate of infection with covid-19 of (a) teachers, (b) teaching assistants, (c) non teaching school staff, (d) staff in registered childcare settings, (e) college staff and (f) university staff.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not hold data on infection rates amongst (a) teachers, (b) teaching assistants, (c) non teaching school staff, (d) staff in registered childcare settings, (e) college staff and (f) university staff.

Advice from the Children's Task and Finish group is that children are at very low risk of serious illness from the virus, and there is also no current evidence that staff are at higher risk of infection than those working in other sectors. This advice can be accessed here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948617/s0998-tfc-update-to-4-november-2020-paper-on-childrenschools-transmission.pdf.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, pupils and students in education settings is always our priority. The Government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities in this unprecedented situation, while mitigating the impact on education. On 7 January, the Department published guidance to universities and students returning to higher education in the spring term. This guidance sets out how we will support higher education providers to enable students to return as safely as possible following the winter break, by staggering this process following the period of national lockdown and to facilitate testing for all. The guidance is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950367/Students_returning_to_and_starting_higher_education_in_Spring_Term_2021.pdf.

The Department also published 'guidance: Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak', which sets out what all schools will need to do during the COVID-19 outbreak from January 2021. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

On 7 January, the Department published guidance for all early years settings and local authorities in England, which provides information on how the national lockdown restrictions to control the spread of COVID-19 will impact early years and childcare settings. This guidance is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950653/Education_and_childcare_settings_national_lockdown_from_5_January_2021_.pdf.

On 8 January, the Department published guidance on actions for further education colleges and providers during the COVID-19 outbreak:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintainingfurther-education-provision>.

The Department will continue to keep our plans under review and ensure our position is informed by the latest evidence.

Universities: Coronavirus

Anne Marie Morris: [133865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of the quality of education received by university students during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government's clear and stated expectation is that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources to study remotely. This is more important than ever at the moment, with the vast majority of students studying solely online. The Office for Students (OfS), as regulator for higher education (HE) providers in England, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards. These set out requirements to ensure that courses are high quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both.

The OfS has published information on quality and standards for providers, providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality academic experience in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This sets out that providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students that is at least broadly equivalent to the provider's usual arrangements. The OfS will keep this guidance under review to ensure it remains relevant to the developing circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on teaching and learning and is regularly engaging with all registered providers. It is actively monitoring providers to ensure: that they maintain the quality of their provision; that it is accessible for all; and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year. The OfS is also following up directly with providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer, and requiring providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

The OfS is also monitoring the position across the sector, for instance, through polling of students' views. Where appropriate and in response to issues raised through that monitoring, it will issue further advice to the sector.

Students have rights under consumer law that they may be able to rely on if they are dissatisfied with their provider's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. In the first instance, students should speak to their provider to see if they can resolve their issue. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. If a student at a provider in England or Wales is not satisfied with their provider's final response, they should go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, which has published guidance on this issue.

11th January

LEGISLATION

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

Coming into force 9th January 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020/568) (“the International Travel Regulations”) to remove Botswana, Israel, Jerusalem, Mauritius and the Seychelles from the list of exempt countries and territories in Schedule A1 to the International Travel Regulation

GUIDANCE

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#)

OFSTED

11 January 2021

An updated publication from OFSTED provides guidance and information relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) for schools, early years, children's social care and further education and skills providers. It now includes details on monitoring visits, remote learning and OFSTED's work with social care and registered early years provision.

STATEMENTS

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Friday 8 January 2021

Coronavirus: Screening

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the medical training provided to staff administering COVID-19 tests to university students.

[HL11051]

Lord Bethell: Depending on where the test takes place, a clinically trained member of staff will take the swab or the swab will be self-administered. All regional test sites have at least one first aider on site at all times. Swabbing

for lateral flow tests can be self-administered but the tests are processed at dedicated testing sites by trained personnel.

5th – 8th JANUARY

GUIDANCE

[Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Last updated 8 January 2021

Department for Education

Find out what you'll need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to maintain provision.

[Face coverings in education](#)

Last updated 8 January 2021

Department for Education

Guidance on the use of face coverings for schools and other education institutions that teach people in years 7 and above in England.

[Mandatory COVID-19 testing introduced to bolster border measures](#)

Department for Transport and Scottish Government

8 January 2021

All international arrivals to England, including UK nationals, will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test taken up to 72 hours prior to departure, the Department for Transport has announced. Passengers will be subject to an immediate fine of £500 if they fail to comply with the new regulations on pre-departure testing. The Scottish Government has announced a similar pre-departure check. All passengers arriving from countries not on the Government's travel corridor list will still be required to self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of test result, and passengers will still be required to fill in a passenger locator form and be subject to national lockdown restrictions. The requirement for hauliers needing to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours of leaving the UK for France is also set to continue.

[The UK response to covid-19: use of scientific advice](#)

House of Commons Science and Technology Committee

8 January 2021

A House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report provides an analysis of the way the Government has received, and applied, scientific evidence and advice during the first period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic up to autumn 2020. The report considers the nature and function of official scientific advisory structures; the transparency of scientific advice; and the use of data in informing the UK's COVID-19 response.

COVID-19 lockdown restrictions could remain in place until April 2021

Times, 7 January 2021, 8-9. Also reported in Independent, 7 January 2021 (Online edition); Guardian, 7 January 2021, 1,6; Daily Telegraph, 7 January 2021, 6

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has warned that COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, which became law on 6 January 2021, could remain in place until April 2021 and that people should not expect a mass relaxation of the rules when they are reviewed on 15 February 2021. The legislation keeps the measures in place until 31 March 2021 but they are to be reviewed regularly.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#)

Department for Education

Last updated 7 January 2021

The DfE has updated the guidance with information for boarding schools, special schools and special post-16 institutions, removed the implementation guidance as this no longer applies, and indicated that for the duration of the national lockdown different education restrictions apply

[Government updates guidance on working safely amid coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Updated: 7 January 2021

Construction and other outdoor work

Guidance for people who work in or run outdoor working environments.

[Higher education providers: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Education

Last updated 7 January 2021

Information on the return of students from January 2021 and NHS Test and Trace channels.

[Mass asymptomatic testing: schools and colleges](#)

Last updated 7 January 2021

Department for Education

GUIDANCE

[Education Secretary outlines plans to support young people](#)

Department for Education

6 January 2021

Following the 4 January 2021 announcement that attendance at schools and colleges is limited to all but vulnerable children and children of critical workers, Secretary of State for

Education Gavin Williamson has announced plans to support the continued education of young people. This includes: strengthened minimum standards of remote learning; next steps on exam alternatives arrangements; and extra funding to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible students.

[Oral statement to Parliament](#)

Published 6 January 2021

Gavin Williamson statement to Parliament on closure of education settings during national lockdown

[Coronavirus: recent developments: Inquiry](#)

House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee

5 January 2021

A Health and Social Care Committee inquiry will consider the Government's response to developments in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic including the number of positive cases, new coronavirus variants and the introduction of restrictions announced by the Prime Minister on 4 January 2021. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, will be questioned by the committee on 7 January 2021.

[Prime Minister announces national lockdown](#)

Prime Minister's Office and 10 Downing Street

5 January 2021

The Prime Minister has announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control COVID-19 after the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) advised that the COVID threat level should move from level four to level five, indicating that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days. The restrictions come into force from 5 January 2021 and are expected to last until the middle of February if the situation in hospitals improve. Cabinet Office guidance "National lockdown: Stay at Home" and a joint statement from the CMOs recommending that the UK COVID-19 alert level move from level 4 to level 5 are also available.

[UK COVID-19 alert level methodology: an overview](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

5 January 2021

Department of Health and Social Care guidance, on the criteria used to move between the alert levels set out in the Government's coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery plan, outlines the five alert levels, sets out the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC)'s approach, and explains the indicators and rationale for escalation and de-escalation of each level.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.3\) and \(All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/8\)](#)

In Force: 6 January 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 to clarify the powers of a police community support officer, and amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 to strengthen the Tier 4 restrictions, and to apply those restrictions to every area in England. In addition, the expiry date for the Regulations is extended in each case.

4th JANUARY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 4\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1654\)](#)

These Regulations amend Schedule 4 to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 so as to make changes to the areas that are subject to Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4 restrictions for the purposes of those Regulations.

In Force: 31 December 2020

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.3\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1646\)](#)

In Force: 26 December 2020

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Travel from South Africa\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1644\)](#)

In Force: 23 December 2020 , 24 December 2020

CORRESPONDENCE

[Letter from Michelle Donelan to higher education students](#)

Department for Education and Michelle Donelan MP

31 December 2020

An open letter from Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Universities, to higher education students about returning to their studies in spring 2021.

[Letter from Michelle Donelan to higher education providers](#)

Department for Education and Michelle Donelan MP

30 December 2020

A letter from Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Universities, to higher education providers about students' return in Spring 2021.

GUIDANCE

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#)

Department for Education, 1 January 2021

How settings can prepare for restrictions to help contain community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Eexcluding universities but including:

- 16 to 18 academies
- further education providers (FE)

[Higher and further education: back to campus 2020/21](#)

House of Commons Library

31 December 2020

What is the guidance for students moving back on to campuses at the start of in 2020-21 and on returning home for the Christmas break? What concerns were raised about the return to campus? How have universities changed the way they organise teaching and how does this affect potential fee refunds? How many students and staff have tested positive for Covid-19? Has the peak among students passed?

[Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Department for Education

30 December 2020

Find out what you'll need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to maintain provision.

[Call for evidence: Risk Assessment and Risk Planning](#)

House of Lords Risk Assessment and Risk Planning Committee

23 December 2020

A Risk Assessment and Risk Planning Committee call for evidence to inform its inquiry into risk assessment and risk planning in the context of disruptive national hazards. It seeks views on how to ensure that the UK is as resilient to extreme risks and emergencies as possible. Comments by 16.00 on 28 January 2021.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Worker, Temporary Worker and Student sponsors](#)

Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration

23 December 2020

This is advice for Worker, Temporary Worker and Student sponsors in the UK who are sponsoring those affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents](#)

Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration

23 December 2020

This is advice for visa customers and applicants in the UK, visa customers outside of the UK and British nationals overseas who need to apply for a passport affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus.

[Higher education providers: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Education

23 December 2020

Information on student movements in December 2020, the return of students from January 2021 and NHS Test and Trace channels.

21st DECEMBER

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers and Obligations of Undertakings\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1611\)](#)

In Force 20 December 2020

These regulations make changes to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020. They create a further Tier of restrictions and place certain areas within that Tier.

GUIDANCE

[Covid-19: Support for jobs: Thirty-Fourth Report of Session 2019-21](#)

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee

20 December 2020

A Public Accounts Committee report on coronavirus job support notes that many workers including freelancers and entrepreneurs have received nothing despite being unable to work at all under lockdown or Tier 3 restrictions. It notes that, by 18 October 2020, the Coronavirus Job Support Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) had cost over £55 billion, and its forecasts that extensions to the schemes announced by the Chancellor will cost the taxpayer a further £21 billion.

[Prime Minister announces Tier 4: "Stay At Home" Alert Level in response to new COVID variant](#)

Prime Minister's Office

19 December 2020

The Prime Minister has announced tougher restrictions for large parts of South East England following a rapid rise in infections attributed to the rapid spread of a new variant of COVID-19. Tier 4 rules will be reviewed on 30 December 2021, as part of a wider review of all restrictions.

[Asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges](#)

Department for Education

18 December 2020

Find out how to administer testing which will begin in January 2021.

[Further and higher education: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Education

18 December 2020

What colleges and universities and other providers need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

STATEMENTS**House of Commons: Daily Report Friday, 18 December 2020**

Universities: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan: [129099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish guidance for universities on covid-19 testing at the end of the spring 2021 term.

Michelle Donelan:

Guidance regarding testing for universities at the end of the spring term will be published in due course. Work is ongoing between the Department for Education, Department for Health and Social Care and the higher education sector to ensure that students are able to travel to and from their places of study over the Christmas break and to get tested before departure and upon return.

The results of this work will inform the guidance for the end of spring, which we will publish with sufficient time for higher education institutions to plan.

17th – 18th DECEMBER

GUIDANCE

[Further education \(FE\) providers: return in January 2021](#)

Department for Education

Published 17 December 2020

Guidance to help further education (FE) providers put in place testing to ensure education resumes in January 2021.

[Staggered rollout of coronavirus testing for secondary schools and colleges](#)

Department for Education

Published 17 December 2020

Testing offered to schools and colleges to minimise cases and transmission of the virus with return of students after Christmas

[Support for students with mental health issues in higher education in England](#)

House of Commons Library

17 December 2020

A House of Commons Library briefing paper sets out data on the prevalence of mental health conditions in higher education students in England and outlines the action higher education providers, the Government and the Office for Students are taking to help students with mental health issues. It also highlights how students can get support and looks at the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Immigration \(European Economic Area\) Regulations 2016 - guidance for applicants](#)

Reported: 17th December 2020

The Home Office has published new guidance for applicants for documentation issued under the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016 (EEA Regs 2016), SI 2016/1052, who have been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions. The guidance covers a range of matters including how to provide alternative evidence of identity and nationality, how continuous residence may have been affected by absences, furloughed workers, EEA national or self-employed worker status, and temporary access to benefits.

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Testing Requirements and Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

[Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) \(No 2\) Regulations 2020](#)

In force on 17 December 2020.

These Regulations are made to remove Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration requirements for coronavirus (COVID-19) test providers, who may have been in the scope of CQC registration under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 in England.

NEWS

[Budget 2021](#)

Treasury

17 December 2020

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak has announced that the Government will publish the Budget on 3 March 2021. It will set out the next phase of the plan to tackle the COVID-19 virus and protect jobs.

[Rishi Sunak extends furlough scheme for another month](#)

BBC News

17 December 2020

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has extended the furlough scheme for one month until the end of April next year.

STATEMENTS H

House of Commons: Daily Report: 17 December 2020

Students: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson: [128741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that universities provide Kosher food options to Jewish students who have been forced to self-isolate due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE institutions in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

HE providers are autonomous institutions, independent from government, and have a responsibility to students when delivering services, including the provision of pastoral support, and taking steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students.

To support universities with this responsibility and ensure students are well looked after during self-isolation, the department has provided advice on self-isolating students in the 'higher education reopening buildings and campuses' guidance and the 'end of term and spring term' guidance. These can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses>.

Universities UK have also produced a checklist for supporting students who are required to self-isolate, available here: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-andanalysis/reports/Documents/2020/uuk-checklist-support-self-isolating-students.pdf>.

Furthermore, and to impress the importance of supporting self-isolating students, I have previously written to Vice Chancellors, asking them to ensure that all selfisolating students have a range of choices available for access to food and other essential supplies. This includes providing food that is free or at a price that can be afforded within a student's budget. I expect this support to continue in the spring term and for universities and other HE providers to be sensitive to the diverse needs of their student population in providing this support

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Thursday 17 December 2020

Students: Counselling and Health

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide additional emergency funding for student counselling and wellbeing services. [HL11326]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Protecting student and staff wellbeing is vital – these are difficult times and it is important that students can still access the mental health and wellbeing support they need. We recognise that many students may be facing additional mental health challenges because of the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is for higher education providers as autonomous bodies to identify and address the needs of their student body and decide what support to put in place. Throughout the pandemic, my hon Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has asked that providers continue to support their students. This has included making services accessible from a distance, and we encourage students to stay in touch with their provider's student support and welfare teams as these services are likely to continue to be an important source of assistance. Many providers have bolstered their existing mental health services and adapted delivery mechanisms, including contacting students who may be more vulnerable. Staff at universities and colleges responded quickly to the need to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing great resourcefulness and good practice.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, wrote to Vice-Chancellors in October outlining that student welfare should remain a priority and has convened a working group of representatives from the higher education and health sectors specifically to address the current and pressing issues that students are facing during the pandemic. The government has worked closely with the Office for Students (OfS) to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students affected by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the funding – worth around £256 million for the 2020/21 academic year – towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, announced in December that we will also be making available up to £20 million of hardship funding on a oneoff basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. We have also worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, which has been funded by up to £3 million by the OfS. Student Space is a mental health and wellbeing platform which aims to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation and is designed to work alongside existing services. Ensuring students have access to quality mental health support is a top priority, which is why we asked the OfS to look at extending the platform. We are delighted they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year.

In addition, over £9 million has been provided by the government to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. Students struggling with their mental health can also access support via online resources from the NHS and Public Health England via the 'Better Health – Every Mind Matters' website, and mental health charities such as Mind

Students: Plagiarism

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the use of (1) essay mills, and (2) contract cheating, by students during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL11247]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and academics around the globe, agree that it is impossible to quantify exactly how widespread the use of essay mills is, as the bespoke nature of these "paid for" assignments can make it difficult for providers to detect that it is not the student's own work. Students who engage in contract cheating are also less likely to volunteer to participate in surveys about cheating. This is a difficult time for students, and those who are feeling particularly worried about their studies could be more vulnerable to essay mills marketing right now. We are also aware of increasing anecdotal accounts of some students being blackmailed by essay mill services. It is abhorrent for these companies to take advantage of students in this situation and profit from anxiety during a global outbreak. It is, therefore, vitally important that higher education providers, the Office for Students (OfS), and the QAA take robust action to deter, detect and address contract cheating. The OfS has published information and guidance for providers and students, and the QAA has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards and support student achievement during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes QAA guidance for providers on how to assess digital delivery with integrity.

We have set a clear expectation that the OfS should take a visible lead in challenging the sector to eliminate the use of essay mills. Ministers have called on universities, sector bodies, ed-tech companies, and online platforms to do everything in their power to help stamp out academic cheating of any kind from our world-class higher education sector. We are also exploring, with the QAA, emerging evidence on the effectiveness of legislation on essay mills elsewhere.

8th December - 16th December 2020

CASE LAW

[No business interruption decision from Supreme Court until next year](#)

Law Society Gazette, 15 December 2020 (Online edition)

Judgment in the business interruption test case to determine whether businesses impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) will receive insurance pay-outs will not be handed down by the Supreme Court until January 2021 at the earliest. The dispute concerned business interruption insurance and the Supreme Court was asked to rule on provisions in insurance policies relating to disease clauses, prevention of access clauses and hybrid clauses.

LEGISLATION

[Personal Protective Equipment \(Temporary Arrangements\) \(Coronavirus\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1484\)](#)

In force: come into force on IP completion

The Regulations are made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 s.45C, implementing temporary arrangements to facilitate the production and supply of personal protective equipment necessary for use during the Covid-19 crisis. These arrangements are similar to the proposals in the European Commission's Recommendation 2020/403 on conformity assessment and market surveillance procedures within the context of the COVID-19 threat, but the arrangements in these Regulations are specific to England, may only be relied on if the Health and Safety Executive has authorised them by a specified date, and come into force on IP completion day.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1533\)](#)

In Force 16 December 2020

These Regulations make changes to the areas which are subject to the restrictions for Tier 2 and Tier 3, as defined in Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Self-Isolation and Linked Households\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1518\)](#)

In Force 14 December 2020

These regulations make amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020. In particular, they provide that where an individual has been notified of a requirement to self-isolate as being a close contact of a person who has tested positive for coronavirus, the period of self-isolation is 10 days, instead of 14, as calculated under reg.3 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Public Health Information\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1517\)](#)

In Force - Bringing into operation reg.1, 2, 3(1), 3(4) and 6(1) on 12 December 2020 and all other provisions on 14 December 2020.

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for Passengers Travelling to England) Regulations 2020.

[Coronavirus Act 2020 \(Expiry of Mental Health Provisions\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1467\)](#)

In Force 9 December 2020

These Regulations expire parts of the Coronavirus Act 2020 Sch.8 in both England and Wales. Sch.8 to the Act made certain modifications to the Mental Health Act 1983 in response to coronavirus. It has not been commenced in relation to England, although some provisions of Sch.8 have been commenced in relation to Wales. Reg.2 expires s.10(1) of, and Sch.8 to, the Act, insofar as those provisions apply to England. It does not, however, expire Sch.8 Pt 3, which makes transitional provision, and nor does it expire s.10(1) of the Act or Pt 1 of that Schedule in so far as those provisions relate to Pt 3. Reg.2 also expires Sch.8 paras 5, 6, 7, and 8 insofar as they apply to Wales. These provisions make temporary modifications to the Mental Health Act 1983 in relation to people suffering from a mental disorder who are accused or convicted of offences. These provisions have not been commenced.

GUIDANCE

[Higher education restructuring regime guidance for applicants](#)

Department for Education

16 December 2020

Details of the restructuring regime for higher education providers in England facing financial difficulties as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workforce fund for colleges](#)

Department for Education

Funding to support colleges and special post-16 institutions with the costs of staff absences for the period from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2020.

[Secondary schools and colleges to get weekly coronavirus testing](#)

Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care

15 December 2020

The Government has announced that every secondary school and college in England, as well as special schools and alternative provision, will have access to rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing from January 2021 to help keep staff and students as safe as possible and in education. Lateral flow

tests are to be deployed to all secondary schools and colleges to help detect asymptomatic cases and break chains of transmission.

[The Government's Response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights Report: The Government's Response to COVID-19: Human Rights Implications](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

14 December 2020

A command paper sets out the Government's formal response to the recommendations made by the Joint Committee on Human Rights in its report "The government's response to COVID-19: human rights implications" (HC 265, HL Paper 125 (Session 2019-21)).

[First wave of targeted Tier 3 community testing initiatives announced](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

12 December 2020

As part of the Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan, the first wave of Tier 3 areas to receive the Government's community testing offer have been confirmed to start community testing programmes. Over 1.6 million lateral flow tests will be immediately delivered for use in December 2020 with many more to follow.

[The government's approach to test and trace in England - interim report](#)

National Audit Office

11 December 2020

An interim report from the National Audit Office (NAO) concludes that, although the Government has rapidly scaled up coronavirus (COVID-19) testing and tracing from a low base, it has yet to achieve all its objectives. It states that too few test results are delivered within 24 hours and too few contacts of infected people are being reached and told to self-isolate.

[Local authority powers to impose restrictions under coronavirus regulations](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

10 December 2020

Updated Department of Health and Social Care guidance on the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 includes new powers that enable all local authorities to take action against specific offences where premises are not operating in a COVID-secure manner, through issuing formal requests for rapid improvement. Three new template attachments are appended.

[Regulation of coronavirus testing](#)

House of Lords Library

8 December 2020

A House of Lords Library *¿In Focus¿* briefing considers two draft regulations that would remove coronavirus testing from the existing regulatory structure and establish a new regime for private providers of commercial COVID-19 testing services.

[SAGE advice on reducing the risk of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) transmission in the home](#)

Cabinet Office

7 December 2020

Advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) advises on how to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 during social interactions in the home.

NEWS

[Law firm sends letter before claim to Health Secretary over vaccine access of individuals with learning disabilities](#)

Local Government Lawyer, 14 December 2020 (Online edition)

Following a report from Public Health England which found that individuals with learning disabilities were more likely to die from coronavirus (COVID-19) than the general population, Bindmans has sent a letter before claim to the Secretary of State for Health calling for individuals with learning disabilities to be granted priority access to the vaccine on an equal basis with other highly vulnerable adults.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 15 December 2020

Students: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [126952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that students can return safely to university after the Christmas period safely.

Michelle Donelan:

On 2 December, the Department published guidance related to the return of students to higher education (HE) for the spring term:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

The guidance sets out that all HE providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. Improved access to asymptomatic testing for the initial return of students in the spring term provides further support to universities to manage the risk of transmission and take swift action to respond to any cases. Universities have put a wide range of measures in place to make teaching and learning environments as safe as possible. We have not seen evidence of an increased transmission risk in these carefully managed teaching environments. To help reduce the risk of transmission from mass movement we have advised that students return to university during a period staggered over five weeks. This will reduce the number of people travelling at once while

balancing the importance of reducing disruption to education. The staggered return approach will also support testing capacity.

Coronavirus: Hull University

Dame Diana Johnson: [102704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of tests for students at the University of Hull covid-19 testing site.

Helen Whately:

We are opening new test sites every week, particularly in and around university settings so that almost all universities are within one and a half miles of testing. The testing site at the Inglemire Lane Car Park in Hull has been operating since 22 September 2020.

Dame Diana Johnson: [102705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value is of the contracts awarded to (a) Deloitte and (b) G4S to run the covid-19 testing site at the University of Hull.

Helen Whately:

The Government does not publish this data in the format requested. All the Departmental COVID-19 contracts are, or will be, published on the GOV.UK Contract Finder service.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 14 December 2020

Assessments: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq: [127600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Oral Statement of 3 November 2020 on Exams and Accountability 2021, Official Report, col 435, what recent discussions he has had with universities on grading exams generously in response to disruptions to student learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government will continue to work closely with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), professional bodies and the Office for Students (OfS) to ensure students continue to leave university with qualifications that have real value, reflect their hard work and allow people to progress. The government expects providers to make all reasonable efforts for student achievement to be reliably assessed and for qualifications to be awarded securely. The OfS, the higher education regulator in England, has issued guidance to the sector setting out expectations about provider approaches to teaching and assessment during this time. OfS guidance is clear - standards must be maintained, but clearly changes to assessments may be required in some circumstances.

The QAA has also published a series of guides and information to support providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes a paper, published in April, which provides an overview of what 'no detriment' policies aim

to achieve and some of the measures providers can put in place to ensure that the academic standards of awards remain secure, while also recognising the challenging circumstances for students. We expect providers to develop solutions appropriate to each course, considering the needs of individual students and to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions. If students have concerns, there is a process in place. They should first raise their concerns with their university. If

their concerns remain unresolved, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint

Students: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [124853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the cost to universities of testing all students returning in the new year 2021; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to universities to deliver those tests.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the end of term break, our top priority for January 2021 is the welfare of students, staff and the wider communities around higher education (HE) providers. As stated in the January 2021 student return guidance, published on 2 December 2020, all HE providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

The Department for Education is actively working with the Department for Health and Social Care to ensure that all HE providers can deliver government supported asymptomatic test sites utilising lateral flow devices which will help to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the staggered return. Personal protective equipment and kits will be provided to HE providers at no cost, along with access to digital solutions, training and clinical guidance to support testing. A cost recovery model is also in place for providers to recover costs for workforce, site set up and site furnishings.

Mr Kevan Jones: [125217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to provide covid-19 tests for students returning to university in January 2020.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the end of term break, our top priority for January 2021 will be the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education (HE) providers. As stated in the January 2021 student return guidance published on 2 December 2020, all higher education providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

The department has sent communications to all HE providers on 2 December detailing the roll-out plans for January tests on return. Providers must return their data capture forms, including lateral flow device (LFD) test kit orders, to the department by 8 December. Providers selecting LFD testing

will receive their kits by 18 December, thus ensuring testing of returning students can commence on 4 January.

The department and the Department of Health and Social Care have been hosting a series of webinars in December 2020 to discuss roll-out plans for January 2021. These sessions are also being used to hear and address providers' concerns about signing up to the testing programme.

Remote Education

Mr Barry Sheerman: [124674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Vice-Chancellor of the Open University on virtual teaching in schools in England.

Nick Gibb:

Department for Education Ministers and officials have had meetings with a wide variety of organisations and individuals in the past year, including the Open University, to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on education. We welcome the Open University's positive contribution to these discussions. For many years, UK higher education (HE) providers have delivered education online successfully and effectively, with the Open University a leading proponent of this.

We recognise that, for some pupils and students, remote education will be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum this year, alongside onsite teaching. Schools have been working extremely hard to develop remote education contingency plans and put these into practice. To help schools meet the expectations for remote education set out in the schools guidance for full opening, the Government has invested in a remote education support package. This includes helping schools to access technology that supports remote education, as well as peer-to-peer training and guidance on how to use technology effectively. It also includes practical tools, a good practice guide and school-led webinars to support effective delivery of the curriculum, as well as information on issues such as safeguarding and statutory duties and expectations. The support package can be accessed through our Get Help with Remote Education page at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>.

Details of Ministerial and Permanent Secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfes-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-traveland-meetings-2020>.

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Monday 14 December 2020

Coronavirus: Students

Asked by Baroness Gardner of Parkes To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to pre-book Covid-19 tests for all university students to take before they return to university after the Christmas break. [HL10333]

Lord Bethell: The Government has established a large number of asymptomatic test sites across higher education institutions. We are working to make the return to higher education as safe as possible. All students will have the opportunity to be tested on their return to university at the start of the spring term. The Government has provided guidance for universities to implement a staggered

return of students over five weeks to minimise the transmission risk from the mass movement of students. Further guidance will be provided in due course, considering future developments and the relevant scientific advice.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 10 December 2020

Students: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan: [124296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to stagger the return of university students to campuses following the Christmas period in order to limit exposure to covid-19.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE institutions in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

The government is committed to prioritising education and want to enable all students who have travelled home for the winter break to return to their universities and resume blended learning. On 2 December, we published guidance on students returning to HE for the spring term in 2021, which sets out our plans for staggering the return of students over a 5-week period:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

Practical and placement students should return first, in line with their planned start dates, from 4 January to week commencing 18 January 2021. Students on all remaining courses should be offered online learning from the beginning of term so they can continue their studies at home, and should be asked to return to their university over a 2-week period from 25 January.

Stephen Morgan: [124297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support university students through covid-19 quarantine periods on their return to campuses following the Christmas holidays.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE institutions in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

On 2 December, we published guidance on students returning to HE for the spring term in 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-educationreopening-buildings-and-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-fromspring-term>.

HE providers are autonomous institutions, independent from government, and have a responsibility to students when delivering services, including the provision of pastoral support, and taking steps to

protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students. It is vitally important that this support is in place, particularly for self-isolating students. I have previously written to Vice Chancellors, asking them to ensure that self-isolating students have a range of choices available for access to food and other essential supplies. This includes providing food to those that need it and facilitating deliveries that will not require students to leave the accommodation where they are self-isolating. We expect this support to continue in the spring term.

Many HE providers have already bolstered their existing mental health services and adapted delivery mechanisms, including reaching out to students who may be more vulnerable. Staff at universities

and colleges have responded quickly to the need to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing resourcefulness, and there are many examples of good practice.

To support with this important work, we have worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that HE providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19.

Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020-21 starting from August, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support. We have also confirmed that Student Space, which bridges any gaps in mental health support for students arising from this unprecedented situation, has been extended to cover the 2020-21 academic year. The Student Space website is available here:

<https://studentspace.org.uk/>. Furthermore, we will be making available up to £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. Further detail will be set out in due course.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 9 December 2020

Students: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [125276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to ensure that students returning from overseas placements for Christmas 2020 have access to nosymptom covid-19 testing.

Michelle Donelan:

All universities have been asked to work in partnership with the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver an asymptomatic mass testing programme. Asymptomatic testing is an important tool to help students adhere to safety measures to protect themselves, their friends, family, and wider community.

All international arrivals, including domestic students on international placement, are required to complete a passenger locator form on arrival in the UK, and passengers travelling from a country not on the national exemption list are required to self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days. See: <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>.

From 15 December, there will be the option in England to take an accredited COVID19 test from a private testing provider after 5 days of self-isolation, with a negative result releasing students from the need to isolate from day 6. Students should discuss what provisions are in place to support them in accessing COVID-19 testing. In addition, asymptomatic testing will be available across participating universities up until the 16 December. Students returning from countries on the national

exemption list who would like to take advantage of this provision should discuss what testing provision is available at their university

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Wednesday 9 December 2020

Covid-19: Higher Education in Spring Term

[HLWS624]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

As a government we made the commitment that students living at university will be able to go home at the end of term if they need or choose to do so. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that students are able to return to university for the spring term. We understand that students, staff and providers need to be aware of the arrangements that will be in place for the spring term before students travel home so it has been our priority to communicate these plans as early as possible. Today, I am announcing those measures which we are putting in place to enable students to return to higher education following the winter break as safely as possible.

Government, students, staff and our wider communities greatly value the vital work of universities. That is why we are committed to ensuring that in-person teaching and university life can continue as far as possible during these unprecedented times. Universities have remained open throughout this pandemic, continuing to deliver high quality education through a blended learning approach.

The government has prioritised education, including Higher Education, so we have worked to create a plan that supports the safe return of all students who left for the winter break and the resumption of blended learning. We remain committed to ensuring that in-person teaching and university life can continue as far as possible during these unprecedented times. We also recognise the huge amount of work that higher education providers have undertaken to set up asymptomatic test sites, provide Covid-secure teaching and learning to students, and carefully manage any outbreaks, and we welcome the early successes of the asymptomatic testing programme.

That said, the large numbers of students planning to travel in the New Year has been identified by public health experts as a possible risk factor for transmission of infection. The January term start dates are naturally staggered but this staggering is much more compressed than at the start of the autumn term, so we are asking providers to plan for students to return over a longer, five week period. This will enable universities and higher education providers to test every student upon their return.

HE providers should first plan to welcome back those students on practical courses and placements, with these students returning to campus in line with their planned start dates from 4 January. We expect providers to make assessments of the courses and students that should be brought back first, based on the requirements of the curriculum, taking into account elements of clinical, practical

and specialist teaching and learning as well as the needs of their students and staff. Providers may accommodate some other students to return to campus earlier but should only do so where there is a genuine need or extenuating circumstances. These students should be able to access campus facilities but should not commence in-person lessons until face-to-face teaching of their course formally restarts. Students who do not have a clearly defined practical element to their course will still be able to continue their studies from the start of term remotely but providers should plan for students to return gradually from 25 January 2021 and staggered over a two-week period.

Staggering the return of students to campus over five weeks has three primary purposes:

i) to provide more time and capacity for universities in partnership with National Health Service Test and Trace to continue their rapid work to roll out

asymptomatic test sites within university campuses;

ii) to help manage the flow of students so that as many students and staff as possible can be tested immediately upon arrival at university; and

iii) to help ensure that students who have practical/assessment elements to their learning in the early part of the term can physically return to campus.

In recent months there have been developments on testing which we plan to use to facilitate the safe return of all students. We will work with higher education providers to put in place asymptomatic testing arrangements for all students on arrival to university. However, individual institutions may choose to offer tests using different testing technologies (e.g. polymerase chain reaction, known as a PCR test), or to partner with neighbouring providers.

We also realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for students and we recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some may face financial hardship. I have now announced that we will be making available up to £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. We will work with the Office for Students to do this, and further detail will be set out in due course.

I want to assure students, staff and their families that their welfare is our top priority. I want to thank universities for their tireless dedication in seeking to ensure safe environments for students and staff. The hard work of university staff has meant we are able to keep students and staff as safe as possible during term. We are pleased we can now announce how students can return to university for the spring term, while keeping themselves, their families, and their communities, as safe as possible. As with all advice, this will be kept under review in light of scientific evidence, and the government will provide further advice if necessary.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 8 December 2020

Students: Employment

Emma Hardy: [124852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the potential loss of earnings to students prevented from returning to their term-time jobs by plans for a staggered return to universities in the 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

We are committed to prioritising education and want to enable all students who have travelled home for the winter break to return to their universities and resume blended learning. While we are confident that face-to-face teaching as an element of blended learning can be done in COVID-secure environments, the mass movement of students across the country has been identified as a possible transmission risk by public health experts. In order to manage this risk whilst reducing disruption to education, we advise that students return to university during a period staggered over five weeks. Further details can be found in the ‘Students returning to higher education for spring term guidance’ published on 2 December and available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

We realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for students and we are aware of the disproportionate impact the crisis will have on some students. In these exceptional circumstances

some students may face financial hardship. Students experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 should contact their higher education provider.

The department has worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £23 million per month for April to July this year and £256 million for academic year 2020/21, towards hardship support. On 2 December, we announced that we will be making available up to £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. Further detail will be set out in due course, and we will work with the OfS to do this.

7th DECEMBER

GUIDANCE

[Coronavirus: A history of English lockdown laws](#)

House of Commons Library - 3 December 2020

Reported: 07 December 2020

A House of Commons Library briefing paper provides a history of England's coronavirus "lockdown laws".

[Guidance Additional COVID-19 local authority enforcement powers](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

Reported: 07 December 2020

Department of Health and Social Care guidance setting out additional powers for local authorities to enforce COVID-secure regulations.

NEWS

[RSA calls for windfall tax on firms profiting from coronavirus](#)

Guardian, 6 December 2020 (Online edition)

The thinktank RSA has suggested that a sales tax levy should be imposed on businesses that have profited from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the monies used to fund a bonus and extended employment benefits for key workers. Putting forward a "new deal" including a cash bonus and extended sick pay, the RSA stated that 37% of social care workers earn less than the real living wage. Businesses such as Amazon, which profited during lockdown, and those that have made substantial profits selling personal protective equipment (PPE), are identified as companies that should be subject to the tax. [Related link.](#)

STATEMENTS

House of Commons Daily Report: 04 December 2020

Reported: 07 December 2020

Research: Students

Esther McVey: [120863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of UK Research and Innovation's decision to withdraw extra grants for PhD students whose research has been affected by covid-19 on

(a) those students and

(b) long term research environment in the UK.

Amanda Solloway:

UKRI have acted to support PhD students during the pandemic. In March, UKRI worked to ensure that all the students it funds would continue to receive their maintenance stipend during the lockdown and would not have to suspend their studies; UKRI-funded students in receipt of a costed extension will continue to receive this stipend during their extension period. In April it was announced that UKRI-funded PhD students in the final year, whose studies have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic would be provided with additional support.

A review of the initial UKRI COVID-19 extension policy was published, bringing together evidence from students, grant holders and university management teams. On the 11th November, UKRI provided a further £19.1 million of funding, which particularly aims to support students who have recently gone into their final year of study (funding end date before or on 30 September 2021) and those with ongoing support needs. Students with ongoing support needs include disabled students, students with a long-term illness, those who are neurodivergent or those with caring responsibilities. Combined, these two interventions have meant that UKRI has made over £60 million of financial support available to students most impacted by the pandemic. It is estimated that this funding is available for up to 12,000 students (over half of the students that UKRI funds).

We are encouraging all PhD students to discuss with their supervisors how projects can be adjusted to complete their doctoral education within their funded period. We will continue to monitor how the pandemic is affecting PhD students and the wider research system.

In regard to the long term research environment, all UKRI funded PhD students are guaranteed their funding within their funded period. The support noted above should ensure the vast majority of students are able to complete their studies on time, or later with support, and able to embark on the next step of their research career

4th DECEMBER

CASE LAW

[R. \(on the application of Francis\) v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care](#)

[2020] EWHC 3287 (Admin)

1 December 2020

The concept of "self-isolation" under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 was not the same as isolation or quarantine which, in the context of the secretary of state's power to legislate under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 s.45C, involved acts by clinicians. The requirement to self-isolate under the Regulations did not amount to isolation, detention or removal to hospital or other establishment as was proscribed by the Act and the secretary of state did have the power to make the Regulations.

GUIDANCE

[HMRC Updated guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)

04 December 2020

Nine of HMRC's guidance documents on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) have been updated, on 1 December 2020, primarily to take account of the passing of the 30 November 2020 deadline for claim periods ending on or before 31 October 2020 under the revised CJRS. Two of the guidance documents were further updated on 3 December 2020

NEWS

[Quarantine rules relaxed for business travellers](#)

BBC News

4 December 2020

Business travellers, musicians, dancers and journalists will be exempt from coronavirus quarantine under new measures designed to boost the economy. The Government announced that the restrictions will be relaxed from 5 December 2020 for people working in key industries, potentially opening the way to mass travel for the first time in ten months.

[Coronavirus: University teaching to move online from 9 December](#)

BBC News

04 December 2020

Universities in Northern Ireland are to move all teaching online by 9 December to allow students to return home for Christmas.

3rd DECEMBER

GUIDANCE

[Exemption for Covid antigen test from 8 Dec to 5 April](#)

BUFDG

03 Dec 2020

Confirmation under SI 2020/1293 provides an income tax exemption for coronavirus antigen tests provided to employees. The regulations come into force on 8 December 2020 and have effect for coronavirus tests provided on or after that date but before the end of the tax year 2020–21.

Other

[Actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Department for Education

Published 23 March 2020

Last updated 3 December 2020

Sets out what further education (FE) providers need to know for the autumn term so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full.

[Extra measures to support students ahead of next summer's exams](#)

Department for Education

3 December 2020

Students sitting exams and other assessments in 2021 will benefit from a package of exceptional measures to improve fairness and prevent disruption. In recognition of the challenges faced by students as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) disruptions, grades will be more generous, students will be given advance notice of some topic areas, and steps will be taken to ensure every student receives a grade, even if they miss a paper due to self-isolation or illness.

[Ofsted: phased return to inspections](#)

OFSTED

3 December 2020

OFSTED has set out its planned return to inspection in 2021, which will happen in phases, with no graded inspections for education or social care providers planned before the summer term. It provides information on: maintained schools and academies; independent schools; early years; children's social care; and area special educational needs and disabilities.

[Planning, commissioning, funding, and supporting provision for post-16 high needs students: Report](#)

Local Government Association

3 December 2020

A Local Government Association report claims that the high needs system is overly complicated, resulting in young people, their parents, councils and colleges facing challenges which have a detrimental impact on those students in further education with special educational needs and disabilities. It finds that Education, Health and Care plans are not sufficiently up to date, statutory deadlines are being missed, arrangements for the transition from school to further education are delayed, and administrative burdens on both councils and colleges are high.

2nd DECEMBER

GUIDANCE

[All students offered testing on return to university](#)

Department for Education,

2 December 2020

Students offered testing for Covid after Christmas as universities asked to stagger returns

[Guidance: Students returning to higher education for spring term](#)

Department for Education

2 December 2020

Guidance from the Department for Education sets out how higher education providers should manage student returns over a five-week period following the Christmas 2020 holiday, with students asked to stagger their return to universities to help protect those around them and reduce transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19). All students should be offered covid tests when they return to university to help identify and isolate those who are asymptomatic but could spread the virus.

[Response to government announcement on students returning to university in the new year](#)

Universities UK

2 December 2020

"Today's announcement demonstrates the government's confidence that universities can safely welcome students back to campuses for blended teaching, learning and support in the new year.

[Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#)

Public Health England and Department of Health and Social Care

2 December 2020

A joint Public Health England and Department of Health and Social Care publication provides updated guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable from coronavirus (COVID-19). The guidance has been updated with information on local restrictions from 2 December 2020.

[Higher education providers: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Education

Published 3 June 2020

Last updated 2 December 2020

How higher education (HE) providers can minimise risk, and information about NHS test and trace channels.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): reducing burdens on educational and care settings](#)

Department for Education

Published 20 April 2020

Last updated 1 December 2020

List of data collections, services or requests which will be cancelled, paused or will continue.

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1374\)](#)

In Force: 2 December 2020

These Regulations impose restrictions on gatherings and on businesses in England. Areas which are not specified in Sch.4 are subject to the restrictions set out in Sch.1. Areas specified in Sch.4 Pt 1 (those areas in Tier 2) are subject to the restrictions set out in Sch.2. Areas specified in Sch.4 Pt 2 (those areas in Tier 3) are subject to the restrictions in Sch.3. The restrictions on businesses include the imposition of restricted hours for certain businesses and closure of certain businesses.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Local Authority Enforcement Powers and Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(SI 2020/1375\)](#)

In Force: 2 December 2020

These Regulations, inter alia, enable local authority designated officers to issue notices to people who are contravening or have contravened various statutory provisions in place to minimise exposure to Coronavirus, and make related amendments.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons Daily Report Wednesday, 2 December 2020

Students: Coronavirus

Esther McVey: [120040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of university students on their needs in the context of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on university education.

Michelle Donelan:

On 18 August, a higher education (HE) taskforce made up of various sector representatives was launched to initially advise on HE admissions. The scope of the taskforce has since been extended to include discussions on broader COVID-19 related challenges faced by the HE sector and

students. We are aware of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on students' mental health, wellbeing, and future life chances, and must do all we can to mitigate its effects. Several taskforce

subgroups have looked at these areas in more detail. The student mental health subgroup, for instance, had representatives from the Student Minds charity and the Office for Students (OfS) to discuss responses from students. The group also heard from a current second year student who attended to share their personal experience and thoughts directly. I also regularly meet with the National Union of Students and have engaged in several Facebook live sessions organised by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service where I have had the opportunity to discuss with students the issues affecting them the most, as well as engaging with students through the student panel of the OfS, virtual visits and The Student Room. We will continue to work with the sector and student representative bodies and engage students, as our top priority for January will be the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education providers.

Charlotte Nichols: [121031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that Jewish university students can return home to their families during the covid-19 outbreak for Hanukkah between 10 and 18 December 2020.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE institutions during this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education. On 11 November 2020, the department published guidance on plans for student movement at the end of term, outlining what providers should do following the end of the national restrictions on 2 December, and how this affects students, irrespective of their religious denomination. To ensure that students can be home at the end of the autumn term, but also reduce any transmission risk, the government is asking that students return home once the national restrictions have been lifted, in a "student travel window" lasting from 3-9 December. This should be in line with specific arrangements put in place by their HE provider. The guidance on student movement at the end of term is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/student-movement-and-plans-for-the-end-of-autumn-2020-term>.

Universities: Repayments

Esther McVey: [120039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) accessibility and (b) effectiveness of the university refund procedure.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous institutions and as such they are responsible for providing clear systems for handling students' complaints and appeals, including requests for refunds. The university's formal complaints procedures should be easily accessible and available on the university's website. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly, and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. Where a student completes the formal complaints process and they are dissatisfied with the outcome, they can take a

complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA offers a free service to students and can review complaints from students made against a higher education provider. All higher education providers registered with the Office for Students provider must co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the OIA and make students aware of their ability to use the scheme. The OIA is independent of the government, and as such, is

responsible for case allocation and timing. The OIA's 'Good Practice Framework on Handling Complaints and Appeals' states that HE providers should normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal complaints process: [oia-good-practice-framework.pdf](#) ([oiahe.org.uk](#)).

Pupils: North of England

Andrew Gwynne: [121823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with universities on ensuring that pupils from schools in the north of England do not miss out on places at high-ranking universities as a result of having to self isolate due to the covid19 outbreak at the time of interviews or entrance exams.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is working closely with partners across the education sector, and with higher education providers, to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the disruption it has caused to young people's education, including for those who will be taking exams and applying to university next year. Universities understand the unprecedented difficulties that students have faced this year. Whilst, as autonomous institutions, they are in charge of their own admissions arrangements, the government has asked that universities be as flexible as possible. We will continue to make every effort to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on young people's education, so that they are well placed to progress to the next stage of their lives, wherever they live and whatever choices they make.

Pre - 1st DECEMBER

STATEMENTS

House of Lords Written Statements

01 Dec 2020

Covid-19 contingency framework for education and childcare settings

“This guidance for local authorities, childcare and education settings (excluding higher education) was published on 27 November and covers contingency plans for: early years and primary schools; secondary schools; further education colleges, alternative provision and special schools). As part of their contingency planning, settings should consider how they would operate in the event that these restrictions become necessary in their local area, including how they would ensure that every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and care to which they are normally entitled”.

House of Commons Daily Report

1 December 2020

Public Health England also collects data on infection, incidence, and COVID-19 cases overall and publishes weekly data on COVID-19 incidents by institution, including educational settings. This can be found [here](#)

Students: Coronavirus

Joy Morrissey: [119381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that students receive value for money as their contact hours are reduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

“As I set out in a letter to MPs on 9 October and in a letter to Vice-Chancellors on 2 November, the government’s clear and stated expectation is that, whether providers are delivering face-to-face, online or blended provision, they must continue delivering a high quality academic experience that helps all students achieve qualifications that they and employers value. If there are concerns, the Office for Students (OfS) has the powers to act. The OfS has made it clear that higher education (HE) providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected. The OfS has published information on quality and standards for providers, providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality academic experience. This guidance sets out that providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students that is at least broadly equivalent to the provider’s usual arrangements. The OfS will keep this guidance under review to ensure it remains relevant to the developing circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak. HE providers must continue to comply with their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that education and learning is accessible to all students. When making changes to

the delivery of their courses, providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on teaching and learning and is regularly engaging with all registered providers. It is actively monitoring those providers which have moved provision predominantly online due to COVID-19 restrictions to ensure: that they maintain the quality of their provision; that it is accessible for all; and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year. The OfS is also following up directly with providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer, and requiring providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

The OfS is also monitoring the position across the sector, for instance, through polling of student views. Where appropriate, and in response to issues raised through that monitoring, it will issue further advice to the sector.

Students have rights under consumer law that they may be able to rely on if they are dissatisfied with their provider's response to COVID-19 outbreak. In the first instance, students should speak to their provider to see if they can resolve their issue. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly, and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. If a student at a provider in England or Wales is not satisfied with their provider's final response, they should go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, which has published guidance on this issue".

GUIDANCE

[The Government's response to COVID-19: human rights implications of long lockdown: call for evidence](#)

House of Commons and House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights

30 November 2020

A Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry on the impact of lockdown restrictions on human rights and whether those measures only interfere with human rights to the extent that is necessary and proportionate, seeks views on: **the impact on university students**; the impact on the freedom of religion and belief; the impact of extended lockdown restrictions on areas subject to the most stringent measures; the policing of lockdown; and the right to protest during lockdown. Comments by 11 January 2021.

OTHER

[Two monthly report on the status on the non-devolved provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020](#)

Command Paper

Department of Health and Social Care

1 December 2020

A Department of Health and Social Care command paper reports on the temporary provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 which are currently active.

