

24th SEPTEMBER

Legislation

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 12\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/1066\)](#)

In Force: 22 September 2021 , 24 September 2021 , 1 October 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 11\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 1033\)](#)

In Force - 14 September 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 Schs.5 and 11.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 9\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/342\)](#)

In Force - Coming into force, in part, on 28 August 2021, in part, on 30 August 2021, in part, on 21 September 2021 and, in part, on 1 October 2021.

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 and Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010.

Guidance

[New system for international travel](#)

17 September 2021

The Secretary of State for Transport has announced a simplified system for international travel in light of the success of the UK's domestic COVID-19 vaccine rollout, providing greater stability for industry and passengers. The existing traffic light system will be replaced by a single red list of countries and territories which will continue to be crucial in order to protect public health, and simplified travel measures for arrivals from the rest of the world from 4 October 2021.

[COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#)

14 September 2021

Cabinet Office guidance outlines the Government's plans for autumn and winter 2021 for England with regard to COVID-19. It includes the Government's "Plan A", a comprehensive approach designed to steer the country through autumn and winter 2021/22. It also outlines a Plan B which would only be enacted if the data suggests further measures are necessary to protect the NHS.

25th AUGUST

Legislation

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 8\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/923\)](#)

In Force - 8 August 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 (“the International Travel Regulations”) and the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 (“the Notification Regulation

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 7\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/914\)](#)

In Force - 2 August 2021 : 23 August 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 by excluding certain arrivals from category 2 countries from testing and self-isolation requirements.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 6\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/865\)](#)

In Force - 19 July 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Self Isolation\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/864\)](#)

In Force - 18 July 2021

These Regulations correct an error in the commencement provisions of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The effect is to ensure that the amendment made by reg.2(2)(a) of those Regulations (which provides that the exemption from the duty to self-isolate for the purpose of posting Coronavirus tests is extended to include tests for antibodies) comes into force on 19 July 2021.

Guidance

[COVID-19 vaccination: guide for employers](#)

5 August 2021

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) guidance for employers on the COVID-19 vaccination clarifies that businesses cannot forcibly vaccinate employees or potential employees unless legally required to do so where the Government has only stated that care home workers in England must be double-vaccinated, with a consultation under way on whether to extend the demand to NHS staff. If people were forced to get vaccinated in other roles, CIPD warns that it could amount to a criminal offence against the person and claims such as assault and battery.

[UK travel update: government waives quarantine for arrivals fully vaccinated from Europe and USA while also confirming international cruise restart](#)

Department for Transport and Department of Health and Social Care

28 July 2021

From 2 August 2021, passengers who are fully vaccinated in the EU with vaccines authorised by the European Medicines Agency or in the US with vaccines authorised by the Food and Drug Administration, or in the Swiss vaccination programme, will be able to travel to England without having to quarantine or take a day 8 test on arrival.

Written Statements

House of Commons - Thursday, 22 July 2021

Students: Finance

Abena Oppong-Asare: [35944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many applicants for student finance were rejected by Student Finance England in the last twelve months because they did not meet the three year residency eligibility period.

Michelle Donelan:

It is not possible to answer this question in the time available because the Student Loans Company (SLC) classes applicants who do not meet the residency criteria as ineligible and their application does not proceed any further. This activity is not automatically captured within the SLC systems.

Universities: Coronavirus

Bill Wiggin: [35527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to reduce funding for universities that do not return to face-to-face learning after the relaxation of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021.

Bill Wiggin: [35528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which universities are offering a fee reduction to students as a result of not offering a full return to face-to-face learning.

Bill Wiggin: [35529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which universities are not planning to return to face-to-face learning in the autumn 2021 term.

Bill Wiggin: [35530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of universities that are not planning to return to face-to-face learning from the autumn 2021 term, after the relaxation of covid-19 restrictions.

Bill Wiggin: [35531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that universities return to face-to-face learning after the 19 July 2021 relaxation of covid-19 restrictions.

Bill Wiggin: [35532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the names of those universities that are not planning to return to face-to-face learning in the autumn 2021 term to allow students to make an informed decision on where they wish to attend.

Bill Wiggin: [35533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has had discussions with student loan companies on a reduction in university fees for universities that are not planning to resume face-to-face teaching following the relaxation of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Michelle Donelan:

From July 19, there are no further restrictions on in-person provision in the autumn term. Higher education (HE) providers can shape their courses without restrictions on face-to-face provision. The position will be kept under review considering the latest scientific evidence and public health advice. The latest advice can be found here:

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

HE providers should therefore not be planning to restrict teaching based on COVID19 restrictions. However, universities are autonomous institutions, and it is for providers to determine their own provision, taking account of government guidance.

We understand that several universities have announced plans on teaching in the next academic year and some will retain an element of blended learning. We know that the COVID-19 outbreak has enabled many providers to identify new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and students will continue to benefit from these alongside in person provision. The department therefore has no plans to publish the names of, or reduce funding for, individual institutions which are not returning to face-to-face provision in the autumn term.

We expect all universities to act in the interest of students and provide them with a full experience, and in accordance with Office for Students guidance, which can be found here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providersabout-student-and-consumer-protection-during-the-pandemic/>. HE providers should communicate clearly to their students what they can expect from planned teaching and learning so that they are able to make informed choices.

The Office for Students has also made it clear that all HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through in-person teaching, remote online learning or a combination of both.

There are no plans to publish names of institutions which are offering fee reductions to their students, as HE providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own fees within maximum fee limits set by the Regulations, where applicable.

The government has already announced that maximum fees in the 2021/22 academic year will remain at £9,250 for a standard full-time course. We also intend to freeze the maximum tuition fee caps for the 2022/23 academic year to deliver better value for students and to keep the cost of HE under control. This will be the fifth year in succession that maximum fees have been frozen.

Whether an individual student is entitled to a refund of their tuition fees depends 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 for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

We routinely meet with the Student Loans Company on a range of matters and will continue to do so as we move forward through the COVID-19 outbreak. However, we have not had discussions with the Student Loans Company on a reduction in university fees for universities that are not planning to resume face-to-face teaching for the autumn term.

Universities: Ventilation

Kate Green: [35628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 30353 on ventilation in universities, what budget has been made available for enforcement activities in respect of ventilation in universities in each of the last 10 years; what enforcement action has been taken in respect of ventilation in universities in each of the last 10 years; and when he last met vice-chancellors to discuss ventilation.

Michelle Donelan:

As employers, higher education (HE) providers have a legal responsibility to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety, including from the risks of COVID-19. They should complete a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace and identify control measures, including ensuring adequate ventilation, to manage that risk, based on relevant government guidance and best practice.

As HE providers are autonomous institutions, they should identify and put in place appropriate plans, in line with government guidance, based on their individual circumstances, and for allocating their budgets based on these plans.

HE providers should identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of their risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving consideration when holding events where large numbers of visitors are on site. These can be achieved by a variety of measures as set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildingsand-campuses/higher-education-covid-19-operational-guidance>.

As set out in the answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 30353 on ventilation in universities, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have published guidance on ventilation during the COVID-19 outbreak which is relevant for HE providers and the HSE may take action if control of workplace risks is needed. This guidance can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/airconditioning-and-ventilation/assessment-of-fresh-air.htm>.

I and my officials regularly engage with the HE sector and the importance of ensuring adequate ventilation has been, and continues to be, discussed.

House of Commons – 19th July 2021**Universities: Coronavirus****Helen Hayes: [29104]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the number of universities which will not fully reopen for in person learning in September 2022; and what steps his Department is taking to support students at those universities.

Michelle Donelan:

As autonomous institutions, it is for higher education (HE) providers to determine their own provision, including their approach to teaching and learning, taking account of any government guidance. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, some providers have accelerated their digital teaching and learning plans and some will retain an element of blending learning. We know that the COVID-19 outbreak has enabled many providers to identify new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and students will continue to benefit from these alongside in person provision. We expect all universities to act in the interest of students and provide them with a full experience and in accordance with Office for Students (OfS) guidance:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-student-and-consumer-protection-during-the-pandemic/>.

However, providers should not be planning to restrict teaching based on COVID-19 restrictions. On 6 July, we published guidance for HE providers, setting out plans from Step 4 of the government's roadmap. This includes that there will no longer be restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in HE providers as a result of COVID-19. There will be no requirement for social distancing or other measures within in-person teaching. Providers will therefore be able to shape their courses without restrictions to face-to-face provision. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, also wrote to education leaders on 8 July, setting out plans as we move towards Step 4, including the government's expectation that HE providers offer students a full, enriching and enjoyable experience while staying as safe as possible. The letter and details of the relevant guidance are available here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/07/08/a-letter-from-the-education-secretary-to-education-leaders/>.

We regularly engage with the HE sector, and this includes ensuring they are aware of the guidance and their obligations. However, as they are autonomous institutions, we do not routinely monitor their individual plans.

The OfS, the HE regulator in England, has made it clear that all HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through in-person teaching, remote online learning or a combination of both.

We have also asked universities to be clear and open about what teaching and learning approaches they plan to use so that students can make informed choices.

There is a process in place if students have concerns. They should approach their HE provider in the first instance. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly,

accessibly and sympathetically by providers to resolve these concerns. Students who go to university in England or Wales and who are not satisfied with their provider's final response can approach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education who will consider their complaint.

Caroline Lucas: [33195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will issue guidance on covid-19 safety measures for recent 18 year olds who are (a) due to go to University in autumn 2021 and (b) all other recent 18 year olds; what discussions he has had with (i) Directors of Public Health and (ii) relevant higher education and health stakeholders on provision of covid-19 vaccinations at universities; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

On 14 July 2021, we updated the higher education (HE) operational guidance for the sector on how HE settings can manage the risks of transmission and outbreaks as students return to campus. This is available at:

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

This includes advice on testing prior to arrival at university and measures on ventilation and outbreak management.

We routinely engage stakeholders in our plans including via the HE Task Force, involving representatives from across government and the HE sector, which meets to explore the challenges currently facing the sector as it continues to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We also regularly engage with the Department of Health and Social Care, and we are working with them to ensure students have easy access to vaccinations at university if needed. We expect universities to work closely with their directors of health, especially for the development of outbreak management plans.

The COVID-19 vaccination is now being offered to everyone aged 18 and over, and we strongly encourage all students to take up the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible, to protect themselves and those around them.

Students should register with a GP to be actively invited for a vaccination, though they can easily request to book a COVID-19 vaccine as an unregistered patient. More information on accessing vaccines can be found on the NHS published student frequently asked questions. HE providers should encourage students to consult with this advice, which are available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wpcontent/uploads/sites/52/2021/06/C1317-COVID-19-vaccination-FAQs-students-inHigher-Education-Institutions-.pdf>.

Students and staff should continue to test twice a week, either using home test kits or at an on-site facility throughout the summer break where settings remain open.

Testing will pause in settings that are closed.

Students should expect to test before they travel back to university, by ordering a free test online or collection from their local pharmacy. On arrival at university, students should take two lateral flow device tests – either using home test kits or at an on-site testing facility – 3 to 4 days apart. This is to reduce the risk of transmission following the movement of students across the country. Final

decisions about testing on return and ongoing regular asymptomatic testing in the autumn term will take into account public health advice. The position will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

House of Lords 20th July 2021

Travel: Quarantine

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether UK passport holders and their spouses who live in the UK travel red list countries of (1) South Africa, (2) Botswana, or (3) Zambia, and who have both received two coronavirus vaccinations, are able to visit the United Kingdom without the need to go into quarantine.

[HL1964]

Lord Bethell: All international arrivals who travel from or transit through a 'red-list' country, including South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia, in the preceding 10 days must quarantine in a managed quarantine facility, irrespective of their vaccination status.

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 21 May (HL18), what information, if any, is retained on requests for exemptions to the COVID-19 hotel quarantine system; if information is retained, how many such requests were made on medical grounds; and how many requests were (1) accepted, and (2) rejected.

Lord Bethell: The Managed Quarantine Service securely retains all the exemption correspondence and associated data within internal Departmental system and fully complies with the relevant provisions of the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Personal data is retained for as long as necessary for the purposes it is needed.

Since February, approximately 60 cases have been granted exemptions from COVID-19 managed quarantine facilities on medical grounds. We do not hold data centrally on the number of unsuccessful exemption requests on medical grounds.

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 21 May (HL18), whether (1) individuals, or (2) a panel, are responsible for assessing applications for medical exemptions from the COVID-19 hotel quarantine system, including the assessment of any supporting medical evidence; whether those responsible for assessing applications for medical exemptions hold any medical qualifications; and how those responsible for assessing applications are (a) recruited, and (b) remunerated. [HL607]

Lord Bethell: To apply for a medical or compassionate exemption, a traveller should contact the Managed Quarantine Service at least 14 days before their travel date, with medical evidence to support their application.

Evidence must be supplied from a healthcare professional, applying professional clinical judgement on the basis of past treatment and an assessment of whether it is possible for adequate care to be provided in a managed quarantine facility. This includes considering whether additional medical support could be provided by telephone, or by a family member joining an individual in quarantine.

This will need to be assessed against the public health risk of variants of concern and conditions may be placed on any exemption.

Applications are considered by trained Departmental staff, following detailed procedures designed by public health professionals and are supported by medically qualified public health professionals. These individuals are recruited and remunerated according to standard civil service procedures.

6th JULY

NEWS

[Mask law and social distancing set to go in England](#)

BBC News

July 05, 2021

Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlines a five point plan for "living with Covid" - but stresses a final decision on easing restrictions on 19 July will come next week

Return to office on 19 July is unlikely

Daily Telegraph

July 05, 2021

The Daily Telegraph has learned that employees will not be told to return to their offices en masse on 19 July 2021, even if the Government's official work from home guidance is lifted. It is likely that there will be a greater focus on "personal responsibility" with both employers and employees to be held accountable for making sure work environments are safe. Companies could be urged to tell their employees to wear face masks and regularly use hand sanitisers in a bid to limit the risks of working from the office.

[Test and trace in England - progress update](#)

25 June 2021

A National Audit Office progress update notes NHS Test and Trace Service (NHST&T) has expanded its testing capacity, tracing activities and distribution of rapid tests, but has further to go in reducing the overall time taken for reaching all cases and their contacts. Pressing challenges that need to be tackled include understanding how many lateral flow devices are actually being used and increasing public compliance with testing and self-isolation.

LEGISLATION

ENGLAND

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.4\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/766\)](#)

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021.

In Force – 29th June; 30th June ; 8th July 2021

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

House of Commons Daily Report July 2 2021

Immigration: EU Nationals

Apsana Begum: [22035]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to introduce a mobile application to simplify the process for EU citizens proving their status when travelling into the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Individuals who have been granted digital status are not required to provide evidence of this to cross the border. Provided the individual travels using a document they either used to apply or have added to their UKVI account, their status will be automatically recognised at the border.

Where an individual travels using a document not known to the Home Office, they may be asked further questions or further manual systems checks may be conducted at the primary control point in order to verify their status.

Beyond this, and as part of our efforts towards becoming a world-leading immigration system beyond 2022 we will aim to deliver a fully end-to-end digital experience for those arriving at the UK border. We will also ensure support is available for those unable to use online services or who may otherwise be digitally excluded.

House of Commons Daily Report June 30 2021

Overseas Students: EU Nationals

Rebecca Long Bailey: [20423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to university tuition fees for prospective students starting courses in the academic year 2021-22 who have been granted settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, whether the three-year residency rule relating to eligibility for home fee status excludes those ordinarily resident for the purpose of receiving full-time education in the last three years; what determines the main purpose of residence for a person who has been ordinarily resident in the UK to live with family or a partner as well as receiving full-time education during that same time period; and if his Department will expand the section entitled Settled status on page 4 to 5 of its document entitled, New eligibility rules for home fee status and student finance for the 2021-22 academic year, published in December 2020, to ensure that information on that matter is clear for prospective students.

Michelle Donelan:

EU, other European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals, and their family members who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreements will continue to have access to home fee status and student financial support on broadly the same basis as now, subject to meeting the usual residency requirements, which are unchanged. Generally, this covers those who:

- are living in the UK by 31 December 2020 having exercised a right to reside under EU law, the EEA Agreement or the Free Movement of Persons Agreement; and
- continue to live in the UK after 31 December 2020.

Such persons will generally have applied for pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before 30 June 2021, apart from Irish citizens, who are not required to apply as their rights will be protected as a result of Common Travel Area arrangements.

From 1 July 2021, a person eligible for the EUSS will be able to make a late application where there are reasonable grounds why they missed the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Those covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, and who have been granted settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, will generally be eligible for home fee status, tuition fee, and maintenance support if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for at least 3 years.

In a case where that person's ordinary residence in the UK and Islands was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education, they must have been ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the European Economic Area or Switzerland immediately beforehand.

The requirement that ordinary residence be not wholly or mainly for the purpose of education is not a new requirement. It formed part of the previous rules which have been retained post-exit for those with EU settled status.

Student Finance England will determine on a case-by-case basis whether an applicant has been resident in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education. However, generally a student would not be prevented from qualifying for support simply because they have been receiving full-time education during some or all of the 3 year prescribed period where, for example, the main purpose of their residence in the UK is to be with their family.

All settled persons who are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, including British citizens, must meet the requirement to have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for at least 3 years, and not wholly or mainly for the purposes of education.

The department regularly reviews its guidance and will publish updates in due course.

House of Commons Daily Report 29 June 2021

Zarah Sultana: [22031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department plans to provide to higher education institutions on the respective provision of online and face-to-face teaching for the 2021-22 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

The roadmap is delayed not derailed. By the autumn term, we have every expectation that we will have already been able to move forward with Step 4, meaning that there will be no further restrictions on the provision of in person teaching and learning.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many providers have developed their digital offering, and as autonomous institutions some might choose to retain elements of this approach. However, they will not have to do this because of COVID-19 restrictions, and our expectation is very clear: universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and ensure it is accessible.

We expect providers to have contingency plans to deal with any identified positive cases of COVID-19 or outbreaks. Higher education (HE) providers should communicate clearly to their students what they can expect from planned teaching and learning under different circumstances and scenarios, so that they are able to make informed choices.

The Office for Students, as regulator for English HE providers, 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.

We intend to update HE guidance in due course to support the return of students for the new academic year.

Overseas Students: Quarantine

Daisy Cooper: [19704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that there is sufficient hotel quarantine accommodation for students arriving from countries on the covid-19 travel red list.

Michelle Donelan:

International students are a vital and valued part of our higher education sector. I speak regularly with my counterparts across the government about how various COVID-19 policies may affect students, with a view to minimising burdens for students while maintaining public health. I remain in close contact with Department for Health and Social Care Ministers responsible for the Managed Quarantine Service.

Quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel is a necessary measure taken in order to stop the spread of potentially harmful variants of COVID-19 into the UK. International students on the 'red list' are still able to enter the UK if they have been in or transited through a 'red list' country in the last 10 days, but they are required to quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel on arrival for ten days as set out in the guidance.

The government recently published an update to the International Education Strategy, stressing the UK's commitment to international students. The strategy contains a number of specific commitments to improve the international student journey, prioritising international student experience.

Students: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [21964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he is providing to universities for students who (a) are diagnosed with covid-19 or (b) have to self-isolate.

Michelle Donelan:

While universities are autonomous institutions, the safety and wellbeing of staff and students is always our priority. We have published the 'Higher education coronavirus (COVID-19) operational

guidance' which offers advice on supporting students who are self-isolating and can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-educationreopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#students-returning-to-campus>. It is vitally important that universities continue to make sure that students feel as supported as possible if they need to self-isolate due to COVID-19. This robust package of support needs to include mental health and wellbeing support, daily communications and ensuring students have access to suitable free or affordable food.

Universities UK have also produced a checklist for providers to support students who are required to self-isolate as well as bespoke guidance for higher education (HE) providers on how to prepare for

and care for students who are required to self-isolate on arrival in the UK. We encourage providers to review this guidance when considering how best to support their international and other students arriving from overseas. The checklist can be accessed here: <https://universitiesuk.ac.uk/policyand-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/uuk-checklist-support-self-isolatingstudents.pdf>.

The Office for Students (OfS) has published a statement on support for students in self-isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak, which can be accessed here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/ofs-student-panelstatement-on-support-for-students-in-self-isolation-during-covid-19-coronaviruspandemic/>.

We have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship in the 2020/21 academic year. This is on top of the £256 million of government funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on. HE providers have are able to use this flexibly to support those students who need it most. It can be used in a variety of ways including the purchase mental health support and help for students due to financial hardship caused by illness and the need to self-isolate.

Alongside this, we have worked with the OfS to launch the online mental health platform Student Space, worth up to £3 million, in addition to the £15 million we have asked them to allocate to student mental health initiatives next year.

Some students may be eligible for a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, if they are required to self-isolate. Further guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-andtrace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-supportunder-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>

House of Commons Daily Report 28 June 2021

Students: Housing

Chi Onwurah: [21218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 2967, how many students have faced difficulty meeting accommodation costs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government plays no role in the provision of student residential accommodation.

We do not collate or currently hold information pertaining to the number of university

students who have faced difficulty meeting accommodation costs. Universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own rent agreements. Whether a student is entitled to a refund or to an early release from their contract will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between them and their provider.

This has been a very difficult time for students. We welcome the decision from many universities and accommodation providers to offer rent rebates for students who needed to stay away from their term-time address, and we urge all providers to join them and offer students partial refunds. We

encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure they are fair, clear and have the interests of students at heart.

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact the crisis will have on some students and we recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some students may face financial hardship. The department has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £256 million for this academic year, towards hardship support. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Providers have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to their students, in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need. Support can include help for students, including international students and postgraduates, facing additional costs arising from having to maintain accommodation in more than one location or assistance to help students access teaching remotely.

We know that not all students will face financial hardship. The current measures aim to target support for students in greatest need and the government continues to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having.

If students have concerns about their accommodation fees, they should first raise their concerns with their accommodation provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, and their higher education provider is involved in the provision of the accommodation, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint. If a student needs help, organisations such as Citizens Advice offer a free service, providing information and support.

If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/>,

<https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain> and

<https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>.

House of Commons Daily Report 25 June 2021

Higher Education: Coronavirus

Ms Lyn Brown: [17711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the (a) financial and (b) academic effect on Higher Education students of the covid-19 outbreak in the 2020-21 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

The government's expectations are, and have been, very clear: 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.

The Office for Student (OfS), the higher education (HE) regulatory body, is taking the potential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on teaching and learning very seriously.

It is actively monitoring providers to ensure that they maintain the quality of their provision, that students are supported and achieve good quality outcomes, that tuition is accessible to all and that HE providers 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 that raise 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 any concerns, it will investigate further.

This government recognises that this academic year has been incredibly difficult for students. As a result of these exceptional circumstances, some students are facing financial hardship, with some incurring additional costs at their alternative address.

Officials are working hard with the sector to continue to monitor the situation and explore potential approaches to supporting students, particularly from disadvantaged groups.

We have made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to HE providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Providers have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to their students, in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need. Support can include help for students, including international students and postgraduates, facing additional costs arising from having to maintain accommodation in more than one location or assistance to help students access teaching remotely.

This is in addition to the £256 million of government-funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on for this academic year, 2020/21. We know that not all students will face financial hardship. The current measures aim to target support for students in greatest need. The government continues to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having.

The OfS required HE providers to return information on disbursement of hardship funding as part of the monitoring of its use. I have been liaising with the OfS on the analysis of those returns.

House of Commons Daily Report 23 June 2021

Higher Education: Fees and Charges

Matthew Pennycook: [16174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the maximum tuition fee limit in response to the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the wider student experience.

Michelle Donelan:

The government remains committed to driving up the quality of higher education (HE) provision, ensuring that student finance is sustainable, and promoting genuine social mobility.

We recognise that tuition fees must continue to represent value for money for students and taxpayers, both during the COVID-19 outbreak and after. The independent panel chaired by Sir Philip Augar that reported to the review of post-18 education and funding made many recommendations regarding HE, including on fees and finance. We continue to consider those recommendations carefully and will conclude the review at the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Our income-contingent student loan system helps remove financial barriers to study and means that no eligible student needs to pay tuition fees upfront. The government has already announced that the maximum tuition fee cap will remain at £9,250 for the 2021/22 academic year in respect of standard full-time courses at approved (fee cap) providers. We are also freezing the maximum tuition

fee cap for the 2022/23 academic year - the fifth year in succession that maximum fees have been frozen - to deliver better value for students and to keep the cost of HE under control. HE providers are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees under this level.

In deciding to keep charging full fees, providers should ensure that they can continue to deliver courses that are fit for purpose and that help students to progress towards earning their qualifications.

If students have concerns, there is also a complaints 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) to consider their complaint. The OIA website is available via the following link: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

The government has worked closely with the Office for Students to make clear that 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, towards addressing student hardship.

We have also made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Support can include assistance to help students access teaching remotely.

2nd JUNE

GUIDANCE

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

Last updated 20 May 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance for higher education providers.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 26 May 2021

Students: Housing

Chi Onwurah: [2967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to secure rent rebates for students in privately managed halls of residence.

Michelle Donelan:

The government plays no role in the provision of student residential accommodation. Universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own rent agreements. Whether a student is entitled to a refund or to an early release from their contract will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between them and their provider. This has been a very difficult time for students. We welcome the decision from many universities and accommodation providers to offer rent rebates for students who needed to stay away from their term-time address, and we urge all large providers to join them and offer students partial refunds. We encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure they are fair, clear and have the interests of students at heart.

We recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some students may face financial hardship. The department has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £256 million for this academic year, towards hardship support. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year.

If students have concerns about their accommodation fees, they should first raise their concerns with their accommodation provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, and their higher education provider is involved in the provision of the accommodation, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint. If a student needs help, organisations such as Citizens Advice offer a free service, providing information and support.

If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/>,

<https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain> and

<https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>

Students: Mental Health**Chi Onwurah: [2965]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on student mental health.

Michelle Donelan:

Student mental health is a key priority for this government and since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, I have stressed the importance of protecting student and staff wellbeing. We recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Universities are not only experts in their student population, but also best placed to identify the needs of their particular student body. We continue to work closely with the higher education sector to promote good practice. While it is for higher education (HE) providers to determine what welfare and counselling services they need to provide to their students to offer that support, the government is proactive in promoting good practice in this area. We continue to work closely with Universities UK on embedding the Stepchange programme within the sector. Stepchange calls on HE leaders to adopt mental health as a strategic priority and take a whole-institution approach, embedding it across all policies, cultures, curricula and practice. The Stepchange programme relaunched in March 2020 as the Mentally Healthy Universities programme. Further information can be found here:

[https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/stepchange\[1\]mhu.aspx](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/stepchange[1]mhu.aspx).

The university Mental Health Charter, announced in June 2018, is backed by the government and led by the sector. The charter, developed in collaboration with students, staff and partner organisations, aims to drive up standards of practice, including leadership, early intervention and data collection. Further information about the charter can be accessed here:

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html>.

I have engaged with universities on this issue and have written to Vice Chancellors on numerous occasions during the past year, most recently last month, outlining that student welfare should remain a priority and have convened a working group of representatives from the HE and health sectors to specifically address the current and pressing issues that students are facing during the outbreak.

My hon. Friend, the Minister for Children and Families, and I have also convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group to drive action to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in nurseries, schools, colleges and universities. We have worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to provide Student Space, a dedicated mental health and wellbeing platform for students, which has been funded by up to £3 million from the OfS in the 2020/21 academic year. We have also asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22 through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities Grant funding to help address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university, given the increasing demand for mental health services. This will target those students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable groups and hard to reach students.

Universities: Coronavirus**Tulip Siddiq: [3079]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the (a) scientific and (b) medical evidential basis for the decision to restrict face-to-face teaching in universities until 17 May 2021.

We have worked extremely closely with scientists and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to understand and model various scenarios to inform our plan to re-open the country without putting unsustainable pressure on the NHS. We have also examined economic and social data to get a balanced understanding of the impacts of carefully easing restrictions. The government has also carefully considered data on the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on ethnic minority communities, the vulnerable, the young, and low-income groups. The government considered all the scientific advice and models that suggested that allowing additional indoor mixing at an earlier stage when prevalence was higher and fewer people had been vaccinated could result in significantly higher numbers of infections and that is why restrictions outdoors were eased before restrictions on most indoor activity. As the number of people vaccinated increased, we have been able to take steps to ease restrictions further.

A wealth of data, papers and evidence is being published at the same time as the roadmap, to ensure transparency on the information the government has had available to it in reaching its decisions. This includes the following information from Public Health England:

Information on vaccine effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccination

A surveillance report with a more detailed summary of the findings so far from Sarscov2 Immunity and Reinfection Evaluation (SIREN) and Severe Acute

Respiratory Infections (SARI)-Watch.

A technical paper on the SIREN analysis being published (as a pre-print) by the Lancet.

The papers from SAGE include:

Minutes from the last 4 SAGE meetings.

Children's Task and Finish Group paper: 'COVID-19 in higher education settings', 10 February 2021.

3 papers from Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) with a summary of modelling on scenarios for easing restrictions, together with the supporting papers from modellers at Warwick University and Imperial College London.

A collection of papers from SPI-M on "relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions and the re-opening of schools", and the Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B) (the behavioural experts' sub-group of SAGE) on return to campus for the spring term and the risk of increased transmission from student migration

The return of students was not considered in isolation but as part of the government's overall roadmap. All areas included in the roadmap (as well as higher education) are informed by advice from the scientific and medical experts. Additional papers published by SAGE in relation to Step 3 of the roadmap can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sage-meetings-may-2021> (opens in a newtab).

House of Commons: Daily Report: 25 May 2021**Students: Quarantine****Daisy Cooper: [2450]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy that (a) international students at UK universities and (b) foreign language students on placements abroad will not have to pay for the cost of covid-19 hotel quarantine on entering the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

Hotel quarantine is in place to prevent the spread of potentially harmful COVID-19 variants in the UK. There is a need to have strict rules in place to prevent the vaccine effort from being undermined. As is the case for any international arrival, the costs of quarantine are borne by the traveller, and the costs are the same for any individual arriving in the UK from (or via) a red list country. However, the department's officials have worked closely with the higher education (HE) sector and colleagues across the government to ensure that UK residents who (are facing significant financial hardship (including international students, due to their visa status) will have the opportunity to apply for a deferred repayment plan when booking their managed quarantine hotel room. Travellers who are eligible will be referred to a government debt collection agency ("Qualco"), who will perform an independent financial assessment and determine an appropriate payment plan. Information on the deferred repayment plan can be found on GOV.UK.

In addition, students experiencing financial hardship should speak to their HE provider about the support available. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to HE providers in the 2020/21 academic year. This is in addition to the £256 million of government-funded student premium funding already available to HE providers to draw on for the 2021/21 academic year. This support can be used to help all students, including postgraduates and international students, who can be confident in expressing concerns about hardship to their provider without any impact on their immigration status.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 20 May 202**Students: Employment****Ed Davey: [2179]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of how students on practical university degree courses will be offered extra support before entering the job market to make up for lost teaching time during the covid-19 lockdown.

Michelle Donelan:

Education has always been a priority for this government, and we were committed to getting all students back into university as soon as the public health situation allowed. We prioritised the return of students on practical and practice-based courses because we realised the importance of them being able to return to their studies in person. The higher education (HE) regulator in England, the Office for Students (OfS), has made it clear that all HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through in person teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both.

We have worked across the sector to understand what more we can do to support graduates who are looking to enter the labour market at this challenging time. We have worked closely with the Quality Assurance Agency, professional bodies and the OfS. Our message to employers and students is that standards have been maintained and that the qualifications awarded will be of the same academic standard as in previous years.

To provide additional support, we have also developed the graduate employment and skills guide, published on 10 May 2021 on the OfS website here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/employment-and-skills/>.

The guide signposts graduates to public, private and voluntary sector opportunities, to help them build employability skills, gain work experience or enter the labour market, as well as providing links to further study options and resources on graduate mental health and wellbeing. To encourage graduates to take advantage of the support and resources available, we have worked with Universities UK to develop a sector statement of support and with HE providers to produce a collection of graduate employability case studies.

As part of the government's skills recovery package 'Plan for Jobs', we are also investing an additional £32 million in the National Careers Service up to March 2022. This investment will support delivery of individual careers advice for over 500,000 people whose jobs or learning have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak by the end of the 2021/22 financial year, representing an increase of 22%. The Service has introduced a range of new initiatives to continue to support all customers, working with a wide range of partners to offer careers guidance activities designed to support employers, furloughed workers, graduates, students, those who have recently lost their jobs and anyone whose career path has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

On 29 September 2020, we added additional courses to The Skills Toolkit covering digital, numeracy and employability skills. The new content includes a range of courses to develop 'work readiness' skills that employers report they value in their new recruits.

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Tuesday 25 May 2021

Universities: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Bull

To ask Her Majesty's Government what funding support they plan to provide to enable universities to continue utilising PCR testing as their campuses reopen. [HL267]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: We have worked with higher education providers to offer twice-weekly asymptomatic testing using lateral flow device (LFD) tests to all students residing in their term-time accommodation or accessing university facilities, and to all staff. This is playing an important role in identifying cases of the virus and breaking chains of transmission. We have supported higher education providers in recovering the costs for the set-up and running of asymptomatic testing sites. From May, higher education providers can offer their staff and students home test kits which can be collected from a location on campus.

Anyone that tests positive for COVID-19 through an LFD test is offered a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test free of charge, and the same applies to students and staff in the higher education sector.

Universities: Remote Education

Asked by Baroness Fox of Buckley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many universities are continuing to use predominantly remote learning; what assessment they have made of reports of complaints by students that they are being discouraged

from returning to campus; and what plans they have to reinforce the guidance that graduate and post-graduate students are entitled to face-to-face teaching. [HL34]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: From the start of the pandemic, the higher education (HE) sector has put in significant resources and worked hard to provide learning materials and minimise the disruption to students. There

have been some innovative and resourceful approaches to deliver high-quality learning online, and we welcome the huge amount of time and resources universities and other HE providers have devoted to ensuring that online teaching is of the high quality expected by students, Her Majesty's Government, and the Office for Students (OfS). Since early January, we estimate that 19% of students were on courses in scope for a return to face-to-face learning, and from 8 March 2021 this proportion increased to 49%. From 17 May 2021, all students have been able to return to in-person learning.

As autonomous institutions with a range of specific circumstances, we expect HE providers to make their own judgments to facilitate the return of students for face-to-face teaching, whilst following the latest public health guidance. We expect providers to continue work alongside local authorities and other agencies to put appropriate plans in place to control and manage any local outbreaks and to minimise transmission of COVID-19.

If students have concerns about their tuition, including the return to in-person teaching, 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. We expect providers to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate, and timely information they need to make informed decisions. Whilst the OfS does not get involved in student complaints, students can notify it of issues which may be of regulatory interest to it. The OfS uses this information as part of its regulatory monitoring activity and keeps HE providers under review to ensure that they comply with the ongoing conditions of registration. The OfS has produced a guide for students to

support them in this process. This is available here: [https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs\[1\]and-students/notifications/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs[1]and-students/notifications/).

20th MAY

LEGISLATION

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

Minor changes to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 (S.I. 2021/582)

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Steps and Other Provisions\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/585\)](#)

In Force 17 May 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place) (England) Regulations, Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings on Public Transport) (England) Regulations 2020, Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Local Authority Enforcement Powers and Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Obligations of Undertakings) (England) Regulations 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability\) \(England\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/582\)](#)

In Force 17 May 2021

These Regulations replace the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 (International Travel Regulations), Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for International Passengers) (England) Regulations 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus, Pre-Departure Testing and Operator Liability) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. They impose requirements on certain categories of person to provide information upon arrival in England, to take coronavirus tests before and after arrival and to self-isolate in order to prevent the spread of infection or contamination from coronavirus or coronavirus disease. They also impose obligations on operators to ensure that passengers receive information and comply with the requirements.

GUIDANCE

[COVID-19: Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms](#)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

18 May 2021

A Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government publication provides guidance for owners and operators of playgrounds and outdoor gyms to enable their use while minimising the transmission risk of COVID-19. It has been updated to reflect the Government's easing of restrictions on meeting friends and family from 17 May 2021.

Government considers contingency plans for local lockdowns in response to the Indian variant of coronavirus

Times, 18 May 2021

The Government is considering contingency plans for local lockdowns or a delay to reopening after 21 June 2021 in response to concern about the spread of the Indian variant of coronavirus.

[Passenger COVID-19 charter](#)

Department for Transport

17 May 2021

Department for Transport guidance explains passenger rights, responsibilities and reasonable expectations for travel from 17 May 2021 while coronavirus (COVID-19) measures remain in place.

[Enabling safe and effective volunteering during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

17 May 2021

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport guidance aims to help organisations and groups understand how to safely and effectively involve volunteers during the pandemic. It has been updated to reflect Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown.

10th MAY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 14\) Regulations 202 \(SI 2021/555\)](#)

In Force: 8 May 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to add and remove events from the list of competitions in Sch.3, which is relevant to the exemption for elite sportspersons from some of the requirements imposed by those Regulations.

GUIDANCE

[Risk assessment methodology to inform international travel traffic light system](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

7 May 2021

A publication from the Joint Biosecurity Centre explains the methodology for risk assessments that inform ministerial decisions on red, amber and green list country and territory allocations.

[Coronavirus: International Travel FAQs for England - Briefing Paper](#)

House of Commons Library

6 May 2021

A House of Commons Library research briefing, which provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about international travel restrictions during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, covers: the international travel ban, reasonable excuses for travel; exemptions; penalties for international travel offences; testing on arrival in England; the "test to release" scheme; hotel quarantine; holiday destinations; and options available when flights are not cancelled but restrictions prevent travel.

[Consultation on arrangements for an autumn 2021 exam series - outcome](#)

Ofqual

4 May 2021

The consultation outcomes and analysis of responses to the Ofqual consultation on proposals for an additional exam series in autumn 2021 in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Ofqual confirms that students who receive a teacher assessed grade in summer 2021 will be eligible to take GCSE, AS or A level exams in the same subject in autumn 2021, and this will also apply to those students who exam boards believe would have sat exams in summer 2021 had they not been cancelled.

[Long COVID - advice for employers and employees](#)

Acas

30 April 2021

Guidance from Acas sets out advice for employers and workers suffering with symptoms of COVID-19 weeks or months after the infection has gone (Long COVID). It suggests that employers: arrange and offer occupational health assessments; look into reasonable adjustments, which can vary from changed hours, to adapted physical workspaces; and discuss flexible working as an option as well as phased returns, which may mean coming back part-time initially to build back up to working usual hours.

30th APRIL

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 13\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/498\)](#)

In Force 23 April 2021

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

GUIDANCE

[Call for evidence: An Equal Recovery](#)

House of Commons Treasury Committee

29 April 2021

As part of its inquiry into the different forms of inequality that have emerged or that may have been exacerbated by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and what the Treasury can do to mitigate them, the Treasury Committee has launched a call for evidence. The areas of inequality that the inquiry will focus on are disability, gender, race, regional and levelling up, and intergenerational, including housing. Comments by 17.00 on 28 June 2021.

[The next normal: futureproofing the workforce for a post-pandemic world](#)

British Chambers of Commerce and Barclays LifeSkills

23 April 2021

A joint British Chambers of Commerce and Barclays LifeSkills report seeks to tackle questions around the workforce challenges faced by businesses during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and how companies can support their staff in the future. The report finds that new ways of working introduced during the pandemic offer opportunities for both employers and staff.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): right to work checks](#)

Home Office and Immigration Enforcement

22 April 2021

A joint Home Office and Immigration Enforcement document provides guidance for employers carrying out right to work checks during the coronavirus pandemic. It has been updated as the temporary adjustments introduced as a result of coronavirus end on 16 May 2021. It states that from 17 May 2021 employers must either check the applicant's original documents, or check the applicant's right to work online, if they have given out their share code.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS**House of Commons: Daily Report: 29 April 2021****Students: Coronavirus****Caroline Lucas: [187189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the prioritisation for covid-19 vaccination of university students ahead of the 2021-22 academic year; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

The department regularly reviews advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and Public Health England to ensure that our policies are guided by the most up-to-date scientific evidence. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the government on which vaccines the UK should use. The JCVI also provide advice on who should be offered the vaccines.

The JCVI have advised that the second phase of vaccine prioritisation should continue to be based on age. They advise that an age-based approach remains the most effective way of reducing death and hospitalisation from COVID-19 and of ensuring that more people are protected quickly. Everyone in the top 9 priority cohorts (those aged 50 and over, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and frontline health and social care workers) has now been offered a first dose of the vaccine. Our target remains to offer a vaccine to all adults aged 18 and over by 31 July

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Wednesday 28 April 2021**Universities: Coronavirus****Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of a delayed return to in-person attendance at universities on the mental health of students. [HL15193]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: We recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Protecting the wellbeing of higher education students is vital, and it is important that students can continue to access the mental health and wellbeing support that they need, both whilst learning remotely and when they return to in-person teaching.

We expect higher education providers to continue to support their students, which has included making support services accessible from a distance and reaching out to those students who are likely to be more vulnerable.

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 support. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has engaged with universities on this issue and has written to Vice Chancellors on numerous occasions, outlining that student welfare should remain a priority. She has also 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 COVID-19 pandemic.

My hon. Friends, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families and the Minister of State for Universities, have also convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group. The group will drive action to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as they return to educational settings and will provide enhanced support for transitions between educational settings in the autumn. We have worked with the Office for Students (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 designed to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation. It is designed to work alongside existing services and provides dedicated, one-to-one telephone, text, and web chat facilities as well as a collaborative online platform providing vital mental health and wellbeing resources. The platform has been extended to cover the whole 2020/21 academic year.

We have also worked with the OfS to clarify that universities and other higher education providers can draw upon existing funding from the student premium to increase their hardship funds for students. We have made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Furthermore, we have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22, through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities grant funding, to help address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university, given the increasing demand for mental health services. This will target those students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable groups and hard-to-reach students.

As part of the mental health recovery action plan, the government has provided an additional £13 million to ensure that young adults aged 18 to 25, including university students, are supported with tailored mental health services. Students struggling with their mental health can also access support via online resources from the NHS, Public Health England via the Every Mind Matters website and the mental health charity Mind:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/> and

[https://www.mind.org.uk/information\[1\]support/coronavirus/student-mental-health-during\[1\]coronavirus/](https://www.mind.org.uk/information[1]support/coronavirus/student-mental-health-during[1]coronavirus/).

House of Commons: Daily Report: 26 April 2021

Universities: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan: [183267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the clinical evidential basis is for his Department's decision to delay the return of university students to face-to-face teaching.

Michelle Donelan:

We are committed to taking a cautious approach to easing restrictions, guided by data instead of dates. Much of the data that has been used to inform decision making has already been published.

It is important that we continue to take a cautious – but irreversible – approach to re[1]opening. Moving too fast, too soon, risks a resurgence in infections, hospitalisations and deaths. Whilst we are aware that there is limited evidence of transmission in in[1]person teaching environments, we must not lose sight of the risks the virus poses and must stay vigilant throughout to ensure this roadmap provides a one-way passage to returning to a more normal life.

We have worked extremely closely with scientists and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to understand and model various scenarios to inform our plan that seeks to enable us to re-open the country without putting unsustainable pressure on the NHS. We have also examined economic and social data to get a balanced understanding of the impacts of carefully easing restrictions. The government has also carefully considered data on the impact of COVID-19 and Lockdown on ethnic minority communities, the vulnerable, the young, and low-income groups.

The government has taken into account all the scientific advice and models that suggest that allowing additional indoor mixing at an earlier stage when prevalence is higher and fewer people have been vaccinated would result in significantly higher numbers of infections and that is why restrictions outdoors have been eased first and restrictions on most indoor activity will remain in place. As the number of people vaccinated increases, we anticipate being able to take steps to ease further as more people are protected. A wealth of data, papers and evidence is being published at the same time as the Roadmap, to ensure transparency on the information the government has had available to it in reaching its decisions. This includes information from Public Health England:

- Information on vaccine effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccination
- A surveillance report with a more detailed summary of the findings so far from the SARS-CoV-2 Immunity & REinfection Evaluation (SIREN) study and Severe Acute URespiratory Infections Watch
- A technical paper on the SIREN analysis being published (as a pre-print) by the Lancet

The papers from SAGE include:

- Minutes from the last 4 SAGE meetings
- Children's Task and Finish Group paper: 'COVID-19 in higher education settings, 10 February 2021'
- 3 papers from the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), with a summary of modelling on scenarios for easing restrictions, together with the supporting papers from modellers at Warwick and Imperial universities
- A collection of papers from SPI-M on "relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and the re-opening of schools", Independent Pandemic Scientific Insights Group on Behaviours (the behavioural experts' sub-group of SAGE) on return to campus for the spring term and the risk of increased transmission from student migration

21st APRIL

GUIDANCE

[Government launches COVID-19 Antivirals Taskforce to roll out innovative home treatments this autumn](#)

21 April 2021

The Government has launched a new Antivirals Taskforce to identify treatments for UK patients who have been exposed to COVID-19 to stop the infection spreading and speed up recovery time. It will explore the most promising antiviral medicines that can be administered at home and will support clinical trials to ensure they can be rolled out to patients as early as autumn 2021.

[Coronavirus: Covid-19 vaccine roll-out. Frequently Asked Questions](#)

House of Commons Library

20 April 2021

A House of Commons Library briefing addresses commonly asked questions about the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine. They include: how is the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine assessed; who is responsible for the vaccine rollout; where will vaccines take place; and will having a vaccine be mandatory.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 20 April 2021

Universities: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill: [178711]

To the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the provision of course modules at universities being delivered as advertised.

Michelle Donelan:

I have been clear throughout the COVID-19 outbreak that consumer law continues to apply, and statements by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) confirm this. Providers need to ensure they have regard to guidance about their consumer protection obligations. This has been a very difficult time for students, and the government is working with the sector to make sure that all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. The sector has put in significant resources and worked hard to provide and prepare learning materials for this academic year and there have been some fantastic and innovative approaches to delivering high-quality learning. I welcome the huge amount of resource universities and higher education (HE) providers have given to ensuring blended teaching is of the high-quality expected by the government and the Office for Students (OfS). 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. I wrote to the OfS on 13 January, outlining the government's expectations of the HE sector following the new national lockdown. Following this, the

OfS wrote to providers' Accountable Officers, setting out the actions that they are taking in connection with providers' compliance with existing regulatory requirements. We expect providers to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions. This letter is available here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/928ddbf-7d48-4a7b11853e-411c34d6202f/ao-letter-regulation-during-the-current-phase-of-pandemic-14-jan-2021.pdf>.

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. Due to the individualised nature of student contracts and student circumstances, the process which is in place ensures that institutions have the opportunity to consider student complaints effectively and offers them an opportunity for early resolution of complaints with students. This is particularly important in situations where remedies other than refunds would be more helpful or beneficial to a student. If there are concerns, the OfS has the powers to act. It is an OfS registration condition that providers must deliver well-designed courses that provide a high[1]quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed. The OfS does not get involved in individual student complaints, that is for the relevant HE provider and potentially the OIA. Students can, however, notify the OfS of issues that may be of regulatory interest to it. These are called 'notifications'. The OfS uses this information as part of its regulatory monitoring activity and keeps HE providers under review to ensure that they comply with the ongoing conditions of registration. The OfS has produced a guide for students to support them in this process. This is available via the following link: [https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs\[1\]and-students/notifications/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs[1]and-students/notifications/).

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

The 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/cma\[1\]cases/consumer-protection-review-of-higher-education](https://www.gov.uk/cma[1]cases/consumer-protection-review-of-higher-education). This includes publishing a restatement on 30 November 2020 on their views on Consumer Protection Law. This is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fc4bab98fa8f5474e63ab0b/HE_restatement_.pdf.

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/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide\[1\]to-coronavirus/student-and-consumer-protection/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide[1]to-coronavirus/student-and-consumer-protection/).

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Tuesday 20 April 2021

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to promote a global vaccine passport scheme.

[HL12773]

Lord Bethell: The Government committed to explore whether and how COVID-19 status certification might be used to reopen the economy, reduce restrictions on social contact and improve safety. COVID-19 status certification aims to provide reassurance that an individual is at reduced risk of transmission. This could allow some freedoms to be restored more safely, for example by allowing mass events to admit more participants, increased passenger numbers and reduced border restrictions for travellers and social distancing rules to be relaxed. The Government believes that COVID-19 status certification could have an important role to play both domestically and internationally, as a temporary measure. Equally, we want to be sure that the benefits of any such approach is rigorously tested, along with analysis of the potential economic impacts that COVID-status certification would have across different settings. We will continue to gather evidence on the extent to which COVID-19 status certification is an effective measure to control the epidemic and reduce hospitalisations and deaths and continue to explore the equity and ethical concerns. The Government will set out its conclusions from the COVID-status certification review in advance of 21 June in order to inform the safe reopening of society and the economy.

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Monday 19 April 2021

Universities: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq: [180567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Higher Education Update statement made on 13 April 2021, if he will publish the scientific advice for the decision to postpone in-person teaching for university students in England until at least 17 May 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

We are committed to taking a cautious approach to easing restrictions, guided by data instead of dates. Much of the data that has been used to inform decision making has already been published. It is important that we continue to take a cautious – but irreversible – approach to re[1]opening. Moving too fast, too soon, risks a resurgence in infections, hospitalisations and deaths. Whilst we are aware that there is limited evidence of transmission in in[1]person teaching environments, we must not lose sight of the risks the virus poses and must stay vigilant throughout to ensure this roadmap provides a one-way passage to returning to a more normal life. We have worked extremely closely with scientists and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) to understand and model various scenarios to inform our plan that seeks to enable us to re-open the country without putting unsustainable pressure on the NHS. We have also examined economic and social data to get a balanced understanding of the impacts of carefully easing restrictions. The government has also carefully considered data on the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on ethnic minority communities, the vulnerable, the young and low-income groups. The government has taken into account all the scientific advice and models that suggest that allowing additional indoor mixing at an earlier stage when prevalence is higher, and fewer people have been vaccinated, would result in significantly higher numbers of infections. This is why restrictions outdoors have been eased first and restrictions on most indoor activity will remain in place. As the number of people vaccinated increases, we anticipate being able to take steps to ease further as more people are protected. A wealth of data, papers and evidence is being published at the same time as the roadmap, to ensure transparency on the information that the government has had available to it in reaching its decisions. This includes information from Public Health England:

- Information on vaccine effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccination.
- A surveillance report with a more detailed summary of the findings so far from the

SARS-CoV-2 Immunity & REinfection Evaluation (SIREN) study and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections Watch.

- A technical paper on the SIREN analysis being published (as a pre-print) by the Lancet.

The papers from SAGE include:

- Minutes from the last 4 SAGE meetings.
- Children's Task and Finish Group paper: 'COVID-19 in higher education settings, 10 February 2021'
- 3 papers from the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), with a summary of modelling on scenarios for easing restrictions, together with the supporting papers from modellers at Warwick and Imperial universities.
- A collection of papers from SPI-M on "relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and the re-opening of schools", Independent Pandemic Scientific Insights Group on Behaviours (the behavioural experts' sub-group of SAGE) on return to campus for the spring term and the risk of increased transmission from student migration.

Justin Madders: [181047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Government plans to publish guidance to universities on the return of the remaining students who do not satisfy the eligibility criteria for face-to-face teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

On 13 April, the government announced that remaining students should return to in-person teaching alongside Step 3 of the roadmap, which is not earlier than 17 May. Students and providers will be given at least a week's notice of any further return in accordance with the timing of Step 3 of the roadmap. We have also updated our guidance on the return of students during the spring and summer terms:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings\[1\]and-campuses](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings[1]and-campuses).

House of Commons: Daily Report: 15 April 2021

Dr Dan Poulter: [180462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to confirm the date from which university students in England will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching with appropriate covid-secure measures in place.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the review into when the remaining higher education students can return to in-person teaching and learning, the government has announced that the remaining students should return to in-person teaching no earlier than 17 May 2021, alongside Step 3 of the roadmap. Students and institutions will be given at least a week's notice of any further return in accordance with the timing of Step 3 of the roadmap. The government roadmap is designed to maintain a cautious approach to the easing of restrictions to reduce public health risks and ensure that we can maintain progress towards

full reopening. However, the government recognises the difficulties and disruption that this may cause for many students and their families and that is why the government is making a further £15 million of additional student hardship funding available for this academic year 2020/21. In total we have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship. We are supporting universities to provide regular twice weekly asymptomatic testing for all students and staff on-site and, from May, at home. This will help break chains of transmission of the virus.

14th APRIL

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Steps and Local Authority Enforcement Powers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/455\)](#)

In Force 12 April 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 to move England from the Step 1 area to the Step 2 area, so that the restrictions set out in Sch.2 to those Regulations apply in England with effect from 12 April 2021, the date on which these Regulations come into force. They also make minor amendments to the definition of "linked household" in reg.3 of those Regulations, amend Sch.2 para.9 to clarify that customers may enter premises serving alcohol to pay for their food and drink, and para.12 of that Schedule to clarify which facilities may remain open in campsites, caravan parks and self-contained holiday accommodation, and make other minor amendments to those Regulations. In addition, they amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Local Authority Enforcement Powers and Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 to extend the powers of local authorities designated officers to issue notices under Pt 2 of the 2020 Regulations to include contraventions of Sch.2 para.12 to the 2021 Regulations.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Information for Passengers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/452\)](#)

In Force 10 April 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to add upcoming events, and remove finished events, from the list of specified competitions in Sch.3 to those Regulations. That list is relevant to the exemption for sportspersons from self-isolation. An amendment is also made to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for International Passengers) (England) Regulations 2020 to modify the information required to be provided, by operators, to passengers departing England. This change reflects that, following the introduction of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 and removal of the "Stay at Home" requirement, a person may no longer be directed to return to the place where they are living but may still be directed to leave an embarkation point.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.12\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/447\)](#)

In Force 9 April 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to add further countries to the list, in Sch.B1, of countries and territories subject to existing enhanced measures.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.11\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/442\)](#)

In Force 6 April 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020. Reg.6 introduces a system of self-isolation for some road haulage workers. Regs 3, 4, 5 and 7 to 11 introduce a system of workforce testing for coronavirus. The Regulations make further minor amendments to the 2020 Regulations. Reg.12 amends the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010 to require laboratory operators to secure consistent numbering of specimens tested.

GUIDANCE

[Remaining university students to return to campus from Step 3 of the roadmap, no earlier than 17 May](#)

Department for Education

13 April 2021

Aligning with Step 3 of the Government's roadmap, where restrictions on social contact and indoor mixing will be further eased, all university students who have not yet returned to campus and in-person teaching will be able to do so from 17 May 2021, at the earliest. Upon return, all students and staff will be encouraged to take three supervised tests (three to five days apart) at an asymptomatic testing site on campus, where this is available.

[Higher Education Update](#)

Statement made on 13 April 2021

The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan)

[Coronavirus: the lockdown laws - Briefing Paper](#)

House of Commons Library

9 April 2021

A House of Commons Library research briefing explains the types of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and requirements imposed by the UK's lockdown laws.

[Global Travel Taskforce sets out framework to safely reopen international travel](#)

Department for Transport

9 April 2021

The Global Travel Taskforce has set out a framework to chart the safe return of international travel, which could resume from 17 May 2021. Recommendations include a traffic light system, which will categorise countries by risk based on the percentage of their population that have been vaccinated, the rate of infection, the prevalence of variants of concern and the country's access to reliable scientific data and genomic sequencing. The removal of the "permission to travel form" is also recommended, alongside: additional enforcement powers for the Civil Aviation Authority, with a consultation on how to use additional tools to enforce consumer rights expected later in 2021; and a COVID-19 charter, setting out what is required of passengers and what their rights are while measures remain in place.

[Face coverings in schools and colleges to remain in place](#)

Department for Education

6 April 2021

The Government has confirmed that face coverings should continue to be worn in secondary school and college classrooms as a precautionary measure when students return after the Easter break. It is expected that the masks will no longer be required to be worn in classrooms, or by students in other communal areas, at step three of the roadmap, which will be no earlier than 17 May 2021.

[Countries added to red list to protect UK against variants of concern](#)

Department for Transport

2 April 2021

The Philippines, Pakistan, Kenya and Bangladesh are to be added to England's red list to protect the country against new variants of COVID-19. From 4.00 on 9 April 2021, visitors who have departed from or transited through these countries in the previous 10 days will be refused entry into England.

31st MARCH

GUIDANCE

COVID-19 vaccine passports "under review"

Times, 30 March 2021, 8

Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Gove has told a private cross-party meeting that NHSX, the digital agency set up in 2019 that produced the Government's contact-tracing app, has begun developing vaccine passports, but that no decisions on the use of such passports have yet been made.

[Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do](#)

30 March 2021 Coronavirus (COVID-19)—Cabinet Office publishes guidance on updated restrictions LNB News 29/03/2021 43 The Cabinet Office has published new guidance on the current coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown restrictions in England. As previously announced by the government in its roadmap out of lockdown, the second phase of step one has begun on 29 March 2021. The same restrictions remain in place except for several situations where changes have occurred.

[Workplace testing programme expands to offer free rapid home testing](#)

29 March 2021

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced that, as part of its free workplace coronavirus testing programme, employers will have the opportunity to offer rapid home testing to their employees.

[Bespoke testing regime unveiled for exempt international arrivals](#)

29 March 2021

The Department of Health and Social Care has set out new details of a coronavirus (COVID-19) testing regime for arrivals from abroad who are to be exempt from quarantine for work purposes.

[Evaluation in a time of crisis](#)

26 March 2021

The Office for Students (OfS) examines the significance of evaluating data research and evidence in higher education regulation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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

26 March 2021

The concession permitting individuals to attend a visa application centre (VAC) in another country to submit their application and biometric information (if their visa application centre is closed due to coronavirus restrictions) has been extended until 30 June 2021

[Government increases support for those self-isolating](#)

26 March 2021

The government has announced that it is to spend an additional £12.9m per month for local authorities to support those self-isolating due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

[Data Protection law can help create public trust and confidence around COVID-status certification schemes](#)

26 March 2021

The Information Commissioner has encouraged the fair use of people's data in schemes to ascertain coronavirus (COVID-19) status. '.

[Travel advice: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

26 March 2021

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office publication sets out guidance for British people travelling abroad during the coronavirus pandemic, if they are legally permitted to travel under current UK COVID-19 restrictions. It has been updated to reflect most current COVID-19 guidance.

[Parliament extends temporary powers until September 2021](#)

Hansard: House of Commons, Coronavirus, 25 March 2021

MPs voted to approve the extension of temporary powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 (CA 2020).

25th MARCH

LEGISLATION

[Coronavirus \(No. 2\) Bill 2019-21 \(HC Bill 279\)](#)

A Bill to make provision in connection with coronavirus; and for connected purposes.

Commons

1st Reading 24/3/2021 HC Vol 691 col 950

2nd Reading Date to be announced

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 10\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/348\)](#)

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to prohibit the arrival in England of aircraft from Ethiopia, Oman and Qatar. Those countries are also added to the list, in Sch.B1, of countries and territories subject to enhanced measures. Arrivals from those countries must arrive at a designated port and enter managed quarantine. Additionally, Mauritius, the Azores, Portugal and Madeira are removed from the list in Sch.B1 and the prohibition on the arrival of aircraft and vessels from those countries is removed. These Regulations also make some minor amendments of and corrections to other provisions in the International Travel Regulations.

In Force 19 March 2021

GUIDANCE

Claims of mass exodus by EU workers an exaggeration

Times, 24 March 2021, 2

The Office for National Statistics has stated that claims of a mass exodus of European workers during the COVID-19 pandemic have been overstated despite a drop in EU citizens employed in the UK, where the number of EU citizens on the payrolls of UK companies fell by 185,000, or 7%, in the year to December 2020. The decline in employed European workers was much smaller than that suggested by the statistics office's Labour Force Survey, which had found that the number of EU workers in the UK had fallen by nearly half a million, or 20%, during the same period. The statistics office figures also do not reflect whether people who left their jobs have also left the country.

[The furlough scheme: One year on](#)

House of Commons Library

24 March 2021

A House of Commons Library insight report considers how the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) has changed over the past year and what might happen once it ends. The scheme was announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak on 20 March 2020, involving HMRC covering 80% of a furloughed employee's wages, up to £2,500 per month. Details include who has used the CJRS and who has been excluded.

[Lockdown laws in England: One year on](#)

House of Commons Library

23 March 2021

A House of Commons Library Insight article looks at how the law underpinning England's coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdowns has been extended, amended and enforced over the year.

Overseas travel ban extended until July 2021

Times, 23 March 2021, 1.

Holidays will be banned until the end of June 2021 with people who try to leave the country facing £5,000 fines as the Government seeks to tighten border restrictions. Quarantine-free holidays may not now be possible to most destinations until August or September 2021. Holidays within the UK are also banned until at least 12 April 2021, when self-catering accommodation is due to reopen. Hotels and other indoor hospitality venues are scheduled to open on 17 May 2021.

[Debate on the Coronavirus Act 2020 and health protection regulations](#)

House of Lords Library

22 March 2021

A House of Lords Library In Focus publication notes that the first anniversary of the Coronavirus Act 2020 passing into law will fall on 25 March 2021. Both Houses of Parliament are due to hold debates on this date to consider a one-year status report on the act and its provisions. The Government is expected to publish the report before the debates take place. The House of Lords is also set to consider certain health protection regulations during its debate.

18th MARCH

GUIDANCE

[Consultation on arrangements for an autumn 2021 exam series](#)

OFQUAL

17 March 2021

An OFQUAL consultation seeks views on proposals for an additional exam series in autumn 2021 in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Proposals include: that grades should be determined by a student's performance in the exams alone; and students will be able to use the better of the summer or the autumn grade. Comments by 23.45 on 9 April 2021.

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

Department for Education

16 March 2021

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

[Coronavirus: Getting people back into work - Briefing Paper](#)

House of Commons Library

15 March 2021

A House of Commons Library research briefing provides information on the measures that are being put in place to get people back in to work following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It covers: recruitment incentives; apprenticeships; traineeships; employee support; and skills and training.

[Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own](#)

Department of Health and Social Care and Cabinet Office

12 March 2021

A joint Department of Health and Social Care and Cabinet Office publication provides guidance on when to wear a face covering, exemptions from wearing one, and how to make your own. It has been updated to reflect the Department for Education's guidance in schools.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 16 March 2021

Education: Coronavirus

Munira Wilson: [165676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the Government has not issued safety standards on face coverings used in education.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to work closely with other government departments throughout its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), as well as stakeholders across the sector. We continue to work to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to continue to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

The Department recently published updated guidance for schools to support the return to full attendance from 8 March 2021, which includes updated advice on face coverings and how to access them. The guidance can be found at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the\[1\]coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the[1]coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance).

Within our guidance, we signpost to the wider DHSC guidance on face coverings which outlines what a face covering is, the reasons for using face coverings, when to wear one and exemptions. In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, a face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth: reusable or single-use face coverings, a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering which must securely fit around the side of the face. Face coverings are not classified as personal protective equipment and they are instead largely intended to protect others, not the wearer, against the spread of infection. DHSC guidance also explains that due to the complexity of the different contexts in which COVID-19 can spread and the rapidly changing and growing evidence base on the effectiveness of face masks and coverings, there are currently no UK product standards for face coverings. The DHSC guidance can be found at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and\[1\]how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your\[1\]own](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and[1]how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your[1]own). PHE has also published guidance on how to make a simple face covering. This guidance can be found at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face\[1\]covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face[1]covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering).

Students: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson: [165672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to support students experiencing hardship as a result of the outbreak of covid-19, with particular reference to (a) term-time accommodation costs and (b) income lost from possible redundancies.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 outbreak will have on some students. We have made an additional £70 million of student hardship funding available to higher education (HE) providers this financial year. The new funding means that universities are able to help students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, for example those facing additional costs for alternative accommodation, loss of employment, or extra costs to access their teaching online. Providers will have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to students, in a way that will best prioritise those in greatest need, including those that have already applied for hardship funding previously but now need additional support.

The funding can be distributed to a wide population of students, including postgraduates (whether taught or research) and international students. This money is in addition to the £256 million of Student Premium funding HE providers are able to draw on this academic year towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment, and mental health support, as well as to support providers' access and participation plans.

This has been a very difficult time for students, and we encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure they are fair, clear and have the interests of students at heart. We know that not all students will face financial hardship. The current measures aim to target support for students in greatest need and the government continues to monitor the situation going forward to look at what impact this funding is having.

9th March

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel and Information for Passengers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

In Force 8 March 2021 & 9 March 2021

SI 2021/252: Amendments are made to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to amend the definition of aircraft crew in Schedule 2 to include certain technical roles and to amend the list of specified sporting events in Schedule 3. It also amends and renames the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Information for Passengers Travelling to England) Regulations 2020. These Regulations introduce a requirement for the operators of outbound services from England to provide information to passengers about the present restrictions on movement in England. These Regulations come into force on partly at 4.00 am on 8 March 2021 and fully at 4.00 am on 9 March 2021.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place and Restrictions: All Tiers\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/247\)](#)

In Force 8 March 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place) (England) Regulations 2020 to make provision in relation to the wearing of face coverings in polling stations. These Regulations also amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 to permit outdoor recreation, gatherings related to electoral activities, to introduce a requirement to declare the reason for leaving or being outside the place where a person is living, when that person is travelling outside the UK, and to make other minor amendments.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.9\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/223\)](#)

In Force 3 March 2021 , 4 March 2021

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

GUIDANCE

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

Department for Education

8 March 2021

Information on the return of students for the spring term and HE operational guidance.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) local restrictions in education and childcare settings](#)

Department for Education

8 March 2021

Department for Education guidance on how education and childcare settings can prepare for restrictions to help contain community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). The guidance applies to: early years providers; schools (including independent schools) and alternative provision; 16 to 19 academies; further education providers (FE); higher education providers (HE); breakfast clubs and after-school clubs; and holiday clubs and other out-of-school settings.

[How has the coronavirus pandemic affected women in work?](#)

House of Commons Library

8 March 2021

A House of Commons Library insight article examines how the labour market changed for women since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and considers what this means for the future of women in work. It covers the fall in women's employment and how it is driven by a fall in part-time work, the sharp rise in redundancies for both women and men, and flexible working as a positive outcome of the pandemic.

[Mandatory form for international travel launched to prevent illegal trips](#)

Department for Transport and Home Office

5 March 2021

From 8 March 2021, passengers travelling abroad will need to carry a new form stating that their trip is permitted under national lockdown rules. The simple form must be downloaded, signed before travel, and carried or downloaded onto a mobile phone. Passengers who are identified by police as attempting to travel internationally for reasons that are not currently permitted will be asked to return home and risk receiving a £200 fixed penalty notice.

[Free rapid tests for all businesses for regular workplace testing](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

6 March 2021

As part of the Government's roadmap to cautiously lift COVID-19 restrictions, businesses of all sizes, including those with fewer than 50 employees, can register from 6 March 2021 to order free lateral flow tests for their employees. Businesses have until 31 March 2021 to register for the workplace testing scheme, which will remain free until the end of June 2021.

Students get payouts for "lost learning" time in pandemic

Daily Telegraph, 2 March 2021, 5

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator has released details of a number of complaints students have made about the impact that coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on their studies, including a complaint made by an international medical student who had been studying at an unnamed university with fees costing £38,000, who was awarded £5,000 compensation after the university stopped all clinical placements as a result of the pandemic. The payout is believed to be the largest made following a complaint about pandemic teaching.

25th FEBRUARY

LEGISLATION

[Employment Rights Act 1996 \(Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/177\)](#)

In Force 31 March 2021

These Regulations make minor amendments to the Employment Rights Act 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) Regulations 2020 consequent on the extension of the Coronavirus job retention scheme by the Direction given on 25 January 2021.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 8\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/166\)](#)

In Force 20 February 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to: in relation to exemptions from the requirement to self-isolate in reg.4 of the those Regulations, require all persons benefiting from the exemptions for energy, infrastructure, medicines and sports roles, and persons who are not ordinarily resident in the UK and benefiting from the exemptions for transport roles, to self-isolate except when carrying out the relevant work/activity; and, in relation to the requirement in reg.3A of the those Regulations to possess notification of a negative test result before arriving in England, amend the required content of the result notification.

GUIDANCE

[Teacher assessed grades for students](#)

Department for Education

25 February 2021

The Secretary of State for Education has announced that as a result of the COVID-pandemic, and the resulting home learning, students will receive grades awarded and determined by teachers, with pupils only assessed on what they have been taught. Teachers will submit grades to exam boards by 18 June 2021, allowing as much teaching time as possible before teachers make their assessments. Exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Wednesday 24 February 2021

Students: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) emotional, and (2) social, impact on university students of remote learning; whether they plan to prioritise the return of such students to classrooms or other physical settings within the next six weeks; and if not, why not.

[HL13197] Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: Protecting student wellbeing is vital, and we recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is why we have asked providers to prioritise student mental health during this period. The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing working group, convened by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has discussed the emotional and social impact of the pandemic on students in detail and has created a resources document for higher education providers, collating the guidance, tools, and services available to support students' mental health. This information is now being spread through the networks of the working group members, including university and student representatives, to raise awareness of the support available and enable people to seek help. The Minister of State for Universities also established the Higher Education Taskforce on 18 August 2020, which is formed of various sector representatives to work through challenges that students are facing. Alongside this, the Office for Students (OfS) has been working closely with the government throughout the pandemic to support students – funding mental health support, monitoring quality, and issuing guidance. We have worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, a mental health and wellbeing platform, which has been funded by up to £3 million. We are pleased that they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year, because no student should be left behind at this challenging time. In the current national lockdown, we have had to take additional steps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, including by significantly reducing the number of students returning to university after the Christmas holidays, and limiting the number of people travelling to and from university facilities. We are now advising providers that they can resume in-person teaching and education for students who are studying practical or practice-based subjects (including creative arts) and who require specialist equipment and facilities from 8 March 2021. Providers should not ask students to return if their course can reasonably be continued online. The government will review, by the end of the Easter holidays, the options for the timing of the return of remaining students. This review will take account of the latest data and will be a key part of the wider roadmap steps.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 24 February 2021

Students: Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra: [151721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with colleges and universities on the loaning of books to students who are studying at home during the covid-19 lockdown.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education providers should consider appropriate provision to support access to university facilities for the purposes of online learning. On 22 February 2021, we issued updated guidance on students returning to, and starting, higher education in the spring term 2021, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963446/HE_guidance_spring_term_220221_FINAL.pdf.

As outlined in the guidance, we expect university libraries to stay open to provide library services during the lockdown, including the provision of study space and borrowing materials if necessary. Libraries have continued to adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak, including by offering order and collect services and providing digital services.

We are clear 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.

We are now advising providers that they can resume in-person teaching and learning for students who are studying practical or practice-based subjects (including creative arts) and require specialist equipment and facilities from 8 March 2021. Providers should not ask students to return if their course can reasonably be continued online. The government will review, by the end of the Easter holidays, the options for timing of the return of remaining students. This review will take account of the latest data and will be a key part of the wider roadmap steps.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 23 February 2021

Further Education: Coronavirus

Mr Toby Perkins: [153193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many further education colleges received additional funding as a result of significant funding difficulties in 2020.

Mr Toby Perkins: [153194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which further education colleges received additional funding as a result of significant financial difficulties in England in 2020.

Gillian Keegan:

The department has put in place the college oversight regime which aims to improve financial resilience and quality by incentivising and supporting college leaders to recognise issues and take action before matters become serious. Where colleges may get into serious financial difficulty, the Education and Skills Funding Agency may provide additional funding if a college might otherwise be likely to run out of money or provide funds to support an agreed restructuring solution.

The department is committed to annually publishing data on colleges that have received emergency funding or funding for a restructuring solution, including insolvency. Information published in December 2020 noted that in the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, 7 colleges were provided with emergency funding or insolvency financial support. All 7 of these colleges received emergency funding in 2020. Between 1 April to 31 December 2020 a further 3 colleges received funding, the total number of colleges provided with emergency funding in 2020 is therefore 10. The department does not release details of the specific colleges that receive emergency funding as this information is commercially sensitive.

Coronavirus: Universities

Caroline Lucas: [99580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the transmission of covid-19 of making tests available for all returning students to universities; and what assessment he has made of the consequences for best practice testing policy for returning students of the most recently released data on the proportion of returning students who have tested positive for covid19 and who were asymptomatic; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Universities are providing asymptomatic testing to students and staff upon return to campus. Regular ongoing lateral flow device testing was introduced for eligible university students and staff from 25 January. This involves twice weekly testing for those who are asymptomatic.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 22 February 2021

Students: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis: [151716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about providing financial support to university students during covid-19; and what support is being provided for students' (a) mental health and (b) remote learning.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact this crisis will have on some students. Officials are working with the sector to continue to monitor the situation. We have 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 impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for academic year 2020/21, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment for remote learning, and mental health support. We are also making available an additional £50 million of hardship funding this financial year. In total we have made £70 million of funding available for student hardship given the £20 million made available to higher education (HE) providers in December 2020.

Providers will have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to students, in a way that will best prioritise those in greatest need. We will continue to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having. We have worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, which has been funded with up to £3 million by the OfS. Student Space is a mental health and wellbeing platform that aims to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation and is designed to work alongside existing services. I have been clear that ensuring students have access to quality mental health support is my top priority, which is why I asked the OfS to look at extending the platform. I am delighted they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year because no student should be left behind at this challenging time. This resource provides dedicated one-to-one phone, text and web chat facilities as well as a collaborative online platform providing vital mental health and wellbeing resources.

Furthermore, we have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22 through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities Grant funding. On 13 January 2021, I wrote to the OfS, the regulator for HE providers in England. I outlined government expectations of the HE sector: 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. The OfS does not get involved in individual student complaints. Students can, however, notify the OfS of issues that may be of regulatory interest to it. These are called 'notifications'. The OfS uses this information as part of its regulatory monitoring activity and keep HE providers under review to ensure that they comply with the ongoing conditions of registration. OfS has produced a guide for students to support them in this process: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-notifications/>.

19th FEBRUARY

GUIDANCE

[Lifting lockdown in 2021: the next phase of the coronavirus strategy](#)

Institute for Government

19 February 2021

An Institute for Government (IfG) report warns that any mismanagement of the "roadmap" out of coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown that risks a fourth lockdown would represent a serious failure of government. The paper sets out how the Government can optimise its strategy and, crucially, learn from past mistakes. If it fails to do so and falls into the same poor decision making habits seen in 2020, the roadmap will soon become defunct.

[Coronavirus: 'No jab, no job' policies may be legal for new staff](#)

BBC News

18 February 2021

It may be legal for companies to insist on new staff being vaccinated as a condition of their employment, the justice secretary has said.

[Get laptops and tablets for pupils and students who cannot access face-to-face education due to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Department for Education

Last updated 17 February 2021

How schools, 16 to 19 academies, colleges, and other further education institutions, can access digital devices for pupils and students learning remotely.

[What place should COVID-19 vaccine passports have in society?](#)

Ada Lovelace Institute

16 February 2021

An interim report by the Ada Lovelace Institute explores the evidence, risks and benefits of public and private sector vaccine passports and COVID status apps. It concludes that at present, vaccination status does not offer clear or conclusive evidence about any individual's risk to others via transmission, so cannot be a robust basis for risk-based decision making, and therefore any roll-out of a digital passport is not currently justified. It recommends the Government offers urgent clarification on the current legal status of the development and use of vaccine passports, especially regarding data protection, equality and discrimination, health and safety and employment law.

16th FEBRUARY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 7\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/150\)](#)

In Force: 15 February 2021

These Regulations amend various instruments containing measures for the protection of health in respect of the SARS-CoV-2 response.

GUIDANCE

[How to quarantine when you arrive in England](#)

Last updated 15 February 2021

What to do before and after you arrive in England, including staying at home and ordering coronavirus (COVID-19) tests.

Firms could demand staff have vaccine passports

Times, 13 February 2021, 9,32. Also reported in Daily Telegraph, 13 February 2021, 6; Times, 15 February 2021, 9

Care homes, schools and businesses are considering the introduction of vaccine passports where the Government has stated that it will not set up its own domestic vaccine passport scheme, but there are no plans to forbid employers from establishing their own. The technology behind the certification scheme, which uses facial recognition, is already ready. Andrew Bud, chief executive of technology company iProov, has admitted that passports posed "big ethical, legal, political and social challenges".

[UK COVID-19 vaccine uptake plan](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

13 February 2021

Department of Health and Social Care guidance sets out the Government's approach to making sure everyone has the opportunity to get vaccinated, the information they need to make an informed decision, and that no one is left behind. The plan emphasises the importance of partnership working and national approaches to enable and support local experts and tackle the barriers that some communities face in taking up the offer of a vaccine.

[Preparing for the COVID-19 vaccination: guide for employers](#)

CIPD

12 February 2021

CIPD practical guidance for employers to help them understand their responsibilities towards staff and support them as the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine rollout continues. It covers: encouraging vaccination and how to communicate this; adopting a vaccination policy; planning for employees who

can't have the vaccine and employees who may be hesitant or refuse; and asking employees (and potential employees) if they have had the vaccine.

[Redundancy protection: pregnant women and new mothers](#)

Maternity Action and Law Centres Network

12 February 2021

Following the Women and Equalities Committee report "Unequal impact? Coronavirus and the gendered economic impact", which found evidence of "potentially unlawful and discriminatory practices towards pregnant women and those on maternity leave during the pandemic" a group of 20 organisations has written to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy urging it to act swiftly on the reports recommendations by adopting the Pregnancy and Maternity (Redundancy Protection) Bill 2019-21.

12th FEBRUARY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 6\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/137\)](#)

February 10, 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to: tighten the exemptions from self-isolation for domestic and international elite sportspersons by removing certain categories of person from those exemptions; update the list of sporting events in Sch.3; and amend the medicines, human and veterinary exemptions to include a reference to the definitions of "Qualified person" and "Inspector" from the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

GUIDANCE

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

Department for Education

Last updated 11 February 2021

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

[How to quarantine when you arrive in England](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

11 February 2021

Department of Health and Social Care guidance provides advice to travellers on what they must do before and after arriving in England from 15 February 2021, including staying at home and ordering coronavirus (COVID-19) tests. Further guidance is available on "booking and staying in a quarantine hotel when you arrive in England".

[Government to introduce tougher measures and enforcement rules for quarantined passengers](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

9 February 2021

The Government has announced that enforcement measures for quarantined passengers, including fixed penalty notices and imprisonment, will come into force from 15 February 2021. All arrivals at English ports will be required to undertake two mandatory COVID-19 tests, on day two and day eight of their 10-day quarantine. Anyone arriving who has been in a country on the UK's travel ban list in the previous 10 days will be required to purchase a quarantine package.

STATEMENTS**House of Commons: Daily Report: 11 February 2021****Further Education: Coronavirus**

Karin Smyth: [145051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to allocate catch-up funding to further education colleges due to the covid-19 outbreak in the 2021-22 academic year.

Gillian Keegan:

We recognise that the disruption that COVID-19 has caused in education settings has had a huge impact on children and young people's learning. Overall, the government has committed to a catch-up package worth £1 billion. This includes a 'Catch-Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. The £1 billion catch-up package also includes the £350 million National Tutoring Programme, which includes £96 million for a 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2020-21 academic year to enable further education and sixth form colleges, school sixth forms

and other 16-19 providers of further education to provide small group tuition for students aged 16-19 to help them catch-up. We are also providing a further £300 million for tutoring, building on the existing £350 million. This funding will support a range of catch-up efforts, including those to support colleges, sixth forms and other FE providers to arrange high quality tuition, building on the £96 million provided last year. Further details will be shared in due course

8th FEBRUARY

GUIDANCE

[OfS advises on how students can report college and university concerns](#)

8 February 2021

The Office for Students (OfS) has issued guidance for students on how to raise a concern about a university or college, particularly as amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic 'it is crucial for students to know what to expect from their university or college about teaching and support'. The OfS has called for universities and colleges to ensure that they are giving out information as soon as possible on how courses are being delivered and changes to teaching and assessment, with clear-cut advice on the implications for individual students. Moreover, the OfS is seeking to boost awareness of its role in the education sector and how it operates to make sure that students receive a good educational experience, stating that it is 'really important that students across the country know how and when to raise issues with the regulator. Although the OfS is unable to get directly involved in individual complaints, it can intervene if there is evidence of its requirements not being fulfilled.' The OfS has issued guidance on how to submit a notification, which allows students, staff and others to highlight concerns where universities and colleges may not be meeting regulatory requirements.

[Government boost to rapid workplace testing](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

7 February 2021

The Government is increasing workplace testing in sectors open during lockdown, to detect coronavirus (COVID-19) in people who are not showing symptoms. The criteria for joining the workplace rapid testing programme has been extended from businesses with more than 250 employees, to businesses with more than 50 employees. The aim is to not only slow the spread of coronavirus, but ensure vital public and economic services can continue.

[Government confirms mandatory hotel quarantine to be introduced from 15 February](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

5 February 2021

From 15 February anyone travelling to the UK from a country on the UK's travel ban list will be required to quarantine in a government-approved facility for 10 days.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 2 February 2021

Higher Education: Coronavirus

Karin Smyth: [141517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what methodology his Department used to determine the level of the one-off funding of £20 million to higher education providers in December 2020 to help to address student hardship during financial year 2020-21.

Michelle Donelan:

We realise that this is an incredibly difficult time for students and are aware of the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 outbreak will have on some students. The up to £20 million of additional hardship funding has been made available to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. The level for this funding was set following discussions with Student Money Advisers within higher education providers and with reference to the views of providers gathered by Universities UK. The funding has been targeted towards those providers who recruit and support high numbers of disadvantaged students, reflecting where this funding is needed most to enable students to continue with their courses and achieve successful outcomes. We asked the Office for Students to ensure that the funding is available to students as quickly as possible, so that it can meet the immediate needs of students and be allocated by the end of this financial year (31 March 2021). On the 2 February 2021 we announced that we are making available a further £50 million of hardship funding for this financial year, for higher education (HE) providers to use to support students in greatest need. This funding can be distributed to a wide population of students, including international students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is in addition to the £256 million of Student Premium funding which HE providers are also able draw on this academic year towards student hardship funds. We shall continue to monitor the situation going forward to look at what impact this funding is having.

Students: Fees and Charges

Karin Smyth: [141513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with universities regarding the potential effect on those institutions of a reduction in undergraduate tuition fees where the quality of the course has been impacted by the covid-19 pandemic.

Michelle Donelan:

I recognise that the COVID-19 outbreak has brought, and will continue to bring, very significant challenges for higher education (HE) providers, including financially. This is why I established the HE taskforce which is made up of representatives from across the sector to discuss COVID-19 related challenges which universities and other HE providers are facing.

Alongside the taskforce, I have been regularly meeting with representatives of the HE sector, including university Vice Chancellors, the National Union of Students, the Union for Colleges and Universities and the devolved administrations. Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees, up to a maximum of £9,250 for standard full-time undergraduate courses offered by approved (fee cap) providers. However, the Government has been clear that universities are expected to maintain quality and academic standards and the quantity of tuition should not drop. Universities should seek to ensure all students, regardless of their background, can access their studies remotely. We have seen some fantastic and innovative examples of high-quality online learning being delivered by providers across the country. If students have concerns about the quality of their course, 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. The changing COVID-19 situation will continue to present challenges and the nature and extent of impact will remain variable across the

sector. The Office of Students is monitoring the situation and the Department for Education is working closely with it and sector representative bodies to maintain an up-to-date understanding of issues arising during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Students: Private Rented Housing

Clive Lewis: [141535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2021 to Question 137247, whether the use of £256 million of existing funds by providers is ringfenced for hardship support; and how much new funding is ringfenced for student hardship support in relation to the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

On the 2 February 2021 we announced that we are making available a further £50 million of hardship funding for this financial year, for higher education providers to use to support students in greatest need. This funding can be distributed to a wide population of students, including international students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is in addition to the £20 million of hardship funding made available in December 2020 and to the £256 million of Student Premium funding which higher education providers are also able draw on this academic year towards student hardship funds. We shall continue to monitor the situation going forward to look at what impact this funding is having

House of Lords: Written Statements and Written Answers: Tuesday 2 February 2021

Higher Education: Student Hardship

Funding

[HLWS748]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan) has made the following Written Ministerial

Statement.

The government recognises that this academic year has been incredibly difficult for students. We asked most students not to return to campus at the beginning of this term because of the need to reduce the transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and because of concern about the effect of the coronavirus variant. This has prevented many students from reoccupying their term-time accommodation following the Christmas break. Many students remain at their non-term-time locations and are accessing their teaching online at present. As a result of these exceptional circumstances, some students are facing financial hardship, with some now incurring additional costs at their alternative address. These challenges were acknowledged by the Prime Minister on 7 January. I have now announced that we will be making available an additional £50m of hardship funding this financial year. In total we have made £70m of funding available for student hardship given the £20m made available to higher education providers in December. The funding will be distributed by the Office for Students to universities, who will have flexibility in how they award the funding to students, including international students, in a way that will best prioritise those in greatest need. Providers are best placed to assess student hardship locally. As an example, support might include assistance for students facing additional costs arising from having to maintain accommodation in more than one location, or an inability to maintain their employment – potentially

in a job based close to their term-time accommodation – if they are not able to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Support Scheme (CJRS). Alternatively, support may include help for students to access teaching remotely, or for students who have already applied for hardship funding

previously but now need additional support. We are working with the Office for Students to allocate these funds and further detail will be set out in due course.

I am extremely grateful for the work universities and other higher education providers are doing to support students during these unprecedented times. This funding will allow providers to build on measures that are already in place.

I welcome the news that a number of universities and large accommodation providers have already offered rent refunds for students who have been asked to stay away from their accommodation. Whilst universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and responsible for setting their own rental agreements, the government is encouraging universities and large-scale private accommodation providers that have not yet done so to offer refunds or other financial compensation. The government is also encouraging all providers of student accommodation to make sure their accommodation policies have students' best interests at heart. We also urge them to communicate their policies clearly and to be fair.

I realise that this year has been incredibly difficult for students, staff and their families, and I want to assure them that their welfare is our top priority. The measures set out here aim to target support at those students with the greatest need and we will continue to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having. I want to thank universities for their tireless work to ensure that students do not have to put their lives or academic journeys on hold.

1st FEBRUARY

LEGISLATION

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 5\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/98\)](#)

In Force 29 January 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 to prohibit the arrival in England of aircraft from the United Arab Emirates. They also add further countries and territories to the list, in Sch.B1, of countries and territories subject to enhanced measures. Those countries and territories are Burundi, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates. The enhanced measures: remove exemptions from the requirement to self-isolate and the requirement to complete a Passenger Locator Form for passengers who have arrived in England from these countries and territories, or who have arrived in England from elsewhere and, during the 10 days preceding their arrival in England, have been in or transited through them; exclude arrivals from these countries and territories and members of their household from the "Test to Release" regime; and require people residing with arrivals from these countries and territories to self-isolate.

[Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(All Tiers and Self-Isolation\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021 \(SI 2021/97\)](#)

In Force 29 January 2021

These Regulations amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 to introduce higher penalties for participating in a gathering of more than 15 people in a private dwelling or certain other places, make a consequential amendment to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 and give the Secretary of State's power to designate the prosecuting authority in relation to offences committed under a number of specified Regulations related to the coronavirus. They also amend the Public Health (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020.

GUIDANCE

[Tougher border controls to protect public health](#)

Home Office

27 January 2021

The Government has announced further action for outbound and inbound passengers to minimise travel across international borders and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The measures include: declaring the reason for travel; managed isolation in hotels; and police checks to ensure people are self-isolating.

[Guidance for providers about reportable events during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

Office for Students

27 January 2021

Updated guidance from the Office for Students advises providers about reportable events during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It focuses on: two new narrowly-defined reportable events relating to short-term financial risk and cessation or suspension of the delivery of higher education, including the inability to award qualifications or credit; and the removal of requirements to report some existing types of event and an ongoing requirement to report some existing types of event.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 29 January 2021

Universities: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [133128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to ensure universities provide adequate support for lost learning during the covid-19 outbreak to new students in the 2021 intake.

Michelle Donelan:

We recognise students have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education this year and this disruption has not fallen equally across the country. In December 2020, the department confirmed the launch of an expert advisory group to consider the differential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on pupils and recommend mitigations for these impacts. In light of the decision to cancel exams, the department is working to finalise the terms of reference and membership of the group. We will ensure that membership is representative of the sector and is geographically diverse. Further details on membership and priorities of the group will be provided in due course. We will consider the advice of the group and work closely with sector leaders in the higher education taskforce on any recommendations arising. Universities are extremely aware of the difficulties that students have faced this year and we encourage them to take this into account and be flexible when making offers to students and when supporting them in their transition into higher education.

27th JANUARY

LEGISLATION

[Official Controls \(Temporary Measures\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

These Regulations come into force on 31 January 2021.

SI 2021/78: Provisions are made to amend Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/466 which has become retained direct EU law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EU(W)A2018), to allow easements to the system of official controls in Great Britain to continue beyond the existing end date of 1st February 2021 to 1st July 2021 in England, Scotland and Wales.

GUIDANCE

[Home Office update on UK visa applicants amid coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

27 January 2021

The Home Office has updated its guidance webpage 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for UK visa applicants and temporary residents', extending its coronavirus concession in relation to the minimum income threshold for family or private life applications. It confirms that the listed concessions will apply where there is a temporary loss of income between 1 March 2020–31 May 2021.

STATEMENTS

House of Commons: Daily Report: 26 January 2021

Students: Fees and Charges

Ian Mearns: [141432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to provide additional funding to higher education establishments to allow them to reduce the course fees charged for academic year 2020-21.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees, up to a maximum of £9,250 for standard full-time undergraduate courses offered by approved (fee cap) providers. However, the government has been clear that universities are expected to maintain quality and academic standards and the quantity of tuition should not drop. Universities should seek to ensure all students, regardless of their background, can access their studies remotely. The government has provided significant support to the higher education sector during the COVID-19 outbreak. Alongside access to the business support schemes, we brought forward £2 billion worth of tuition fee payments, provided £280 million of grant funding for research and established a loan scheme to cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020/21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity support research. We are working closely with the Office for Students, and the sector to maintain an up-to-date understanding of issues arising during this academic year and are extremely grateful for the work of universities and other higher education providers.

Students: Housing

Ian Mearns: [141431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that university students who have entered contracts for accommodation and who are now prevented from travelling to as a result of covid-19 restrictions are freed from their contractual obligation to pay.

Michelle Donelan:

The government plays no role in the provision of student residential accommodation. Universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own rent agreements. Whether a student is entitled to a refund or to an early release from their contract will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between them and their provider.

This has been a very difficult time for students, and we encourage universities and private landlords to review their accommodation policies to ensure that they are fair, clear and have the interests of students at heart. We recognise that, in these exceptional circumstances, some students may face financial hardship. The department has worked with the Office for Students to clarify that providers are able to draw on existing funds, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020/21, towards hardship support. The government is making available up to a further £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, said on 7 January, we are considering what more we can do to provide further support to students.

Maintenance loans are available as a contribution towards a student's living costs while attending university. The system targets the most living cost support at those from the lowest income families, who need it most. Students undertaking courses that would normally require attendance on-site, but for which learning has moved either fully or partially online due to the COVID-19 outbreak, will qualify for living costs support in the 2020/2021 academic year as they would ordinarily, provided that they continue to engage with their higher education (HE) provider. This also applies when the student is prevented from attending the course physically and is required to study online due to shielding. If students have concerns about their accommodation fees, they should first raise their concerns with their accommodation provider. If their concerns remain unresolved, and their HE provider is involved in the provision of the accommodation, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education to consider their complaint. If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found at: <https://www.thesac.org.uk/>, <https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain>, and <https://www.rla.org.uk/about/nrla-code-of-practice.shtml>

Universities: Coronavirus

Hilary Benn: [138877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the safety of university libraries for staff and students from the transmission of covid-19; and whether he has plans to review the covid-19 guidance on the opening of university libraries during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority and the government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE providers in this unprecedented situation, while mitigating the impact on education. As stated in the spring term 2021 student return guidance published on 7 January 2021, all HE providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return, which will help to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and control outbreaks. The guidance can be found here:

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

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, including libraries.

The majority of courses should be delivered online until at least mid-February. Providers are permitted to open facilities to support the teaching and learning of those students who can return for face-to-face teaching, and a limited number of other students who have an exceptional reason to return to university facilities, but these should be maintained for essential use only wherever possible. Our aim is to minimise the number of students who return to university to access university facilities.

Universities have worked extremely hard to put in place a wide range of measures to deliver a COVID-secure environment. Measures include enhanced cleaning and improved ventilation and changes to university lay-out to comply with social distancing guidelines. In addition, all universities have plans for managing and controlling outbreaks. These have been agreed with local directors of public health and continue to be reviewed and updated based on emerging lessons and local situations. Providers have carried out risk assessments for each setting including libraries, putting in place measures to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Mr Kevan Jones: [138887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that students returning to universities do not contribute to higher covid-19 transmission rates in the localities where their student accommodation is based.

Michelle Donelan:

Our top priority remains the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education (HE) providers. To help providers make informed decisions about their provision, the government issued guidance on national restrictions and return of students in spring term for the sector based on the latest public health advice.

We are taking 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 prioritising the return to face-to-face teaching for courses which are most important to be delivered in-person, predominately clinical based courses such as medicine and dentistry, in order to support the pipeline of future key workers. The guidance on which courses can return can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950583/Students_returning_to_and_starting_higher_education_in_Spring_Term_2021_FINAL_v3.pdf.

As stated in the spring term 2021 student return guidance, all HE providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopeningbuildings-and-campuses>.

NHS Test and Trace is working with providers to support the roll-out of mass asymptomatic testing via lateral flow devices for all students on their return. This support will be in the form of personal protective equipment, testing kits, and cost recovery for workforce. Local community testing is also now available in some areas. HE providers should work with their local authority to consider how the local mass asymptomatic testing might help their students.

All universities have plans for managing and controlling outbreaks. These have been agreed with local directors of public health and continue to be reviewed and updated based on emerging lessons and local situations. We expect universities and other HE providers to continue to prioritise the health and safety of their staff, students, and local community by putting in place measures that apply to their individual circumstances.

House of Commons: Daily Report: 25 January 2021

Universities: Admissions

Emma Hardy: [134079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of gathering (a) data on pupil absence due to the covid-19 outbreak and (b) other data on pupils to assist universities with the entrance selection for 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

We recognise that students applying to university in 2021 have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Universities have an important role to play in ensuring that this is a country where everyone can reach their potential, regardless of their background or ethnicity.

Universities are independent and autonomous institutions. As such, how to use data in their admissions decisions is a matter for each individual higher education provider. However, we would encourage universities to be flexible when making offers to individual students whose education has been disproportionately and adversely impacted from the COVID-19 outbreak, to ensure that these students are able to receive fair offers for 2021. We will give further and higher education providers the earliest possible indication of the process and timescale for how grades will be awarded this year, so they can plan accordingly.

The department continues to regularly publish statistics on pupil attendance and COVID-related absence in schools.

25th JANUARY

LEGISLATION

[The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Public Health Information\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

Coming into force at 4.00 a.m. on 22nd January 2021

These regulations add the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania.

GUIDANCE

[More employers sign up to rapid testing to protect workforce](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

24 January 2021

Businesses and public sector organisations are joining a government scheme to test workers without symptoms who cannot work from home. The expansion of testing will find more positive cases, keeping key workers from unknowingly passing on the virus and protecting vital services.

[Home Secretary's statement on coronavirus: 21 January 2021](#)

Home Office

21 January 2021

Giving the coronavirus briefing on 21 January 2021, the Home Secretary announced a new £800 fine for people who attend house parties, which will double for each repeat offence to a maximum level of £6,400. The fines will apply to those who attend illegal gatherings of more than 15 people in homes.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges](#)

Last updated 21 January 2021

Information for schools and colleges about testing from January.

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 selfisolating. 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 cooperate 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](https://www.oiahe.org.uk/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf) ([oiahe.org.uk](https://www.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.

