

Local Government Bulletin

6 January 2021

This is the regular bulletin MHCLG sends out, updating you on the latest government guidance, advice, communications products and other useful information about coronavirus (COVID-19), EU transition and other topics of interest for local government.

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Coronavirus updates

Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus regulations

Today (6 January), the Prime Minister gave a statement to Parliament on the coronavirus regulations in England and provided an update on the rollout of vaccinations.

Statement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-covid-19-regulations-6-january-2021>

Regulations: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/8/made>

Explanatory memorandum:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/8/pdfs/uksiem_20210008_en.pdf

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

Education Secretary statement to Parliament on national lockdown

Today (6 January), the Education Secretary, Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP gave a statement in the House of Commons on the closure of education settings during national lockdown.

In the statement, he confirmed that GCSEs and A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer, and that a form of teacher-assessed grades would be used, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently.

The Government has also confirmed schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams that are due to take place in January, where they judge it right to do so. This will support schools and colleges whose students have worked hard to prepare for assessments and exams where necessary. This may be particularly important for vocational technical qualifications which require a 'license to practice' which can only be fulfilled through practical assessment, such as an electrician.

Statement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-statement-to-parliament-on-national-lockdown>

Critical workers and vulnerable children who can attend school and college

Yesterday (5 January), the Government announced that, during the period of national lockdown, schools and colleges should only allow vulnerable children and the children of critical workers to attend.

Children with at least one parent or carer who is listed as a critical worker are eligible for a school place. It is not necessary for both parents to be critical workers.

The critical worker list has also been updated to include new workforces whose work is critical following the end of the EU transition period. It is important these people are also identified as critical workers and their children can attend schools and colleges.

Initial teacher training (ITT) trainees are also critical workers and can continue to go into their placement school throughout the national lockdown and support the provision of remote education. Trainees who continue to go into their host school should be offered coronavirus testing in the same way as wider school staff.

Guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_source=5%20January%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt#critical-workers?utm_source=5%20January%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Schools to get help with technology

All secondary schools have been invited by the Government to order laptops and tablets through the 'Get help with technology service' to support remote education.

The Department of Education (DfE) will invite primary schools to order over the coming weeks, starting with the most disadvantaged areas in England and will contact each school by email as soon as they can order.

Most orders will be delivered within two working days of being placed, and DfE aim to deliver all orders within five working days. They are also providing internet connections where they are needed.

DfE can also help councils set up a digital education platform (Google for Education or Microsoft 365 for Education) for free, if needed. The Government will be providing further support to schools for remote education shortly.

Order laptops: <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/start>

Get internet access: <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/internet-access>

Digital education platform: <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/digital-platforms#about-the-programme>

Delivery of lateral flow test kits to schools

All schools with secondary-age pupils, including independent schools, special schools, alternative provision, sixth forms and further education colleges, will receive an initial delivery of lateral flow device test kits to support asymptomatic testing from the start of the spring term.

Schools should complete the form below if they have not received their initial delivery or have missing or damaged items. This form can also be used to report issues related to asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges that cannot be resolved by the published guidance or by calling the DfE coronavirus helpline on 0800 046 8687.

DfE has also uploaded plans for the delivery of test kits onto the schools and colleges document sharing platform.

The coronavirus testing programme should also be continued to enable weekly testing for staff and daily close contact testing for those staff and pupils attending secondary schools and colleges. This programme also allows schools and colleges to test pupils on return.

Form: <https://form.education.gov.uk/service/rapid-testing-contact>

Document sharing platform:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jYv0MjFyllbzgPn_1S10OuRqfri_b5_P

Pausing of the educational settings status form

The Department of Education (DfE) has announced that schools and colleges do not need to complete the educational setting status form from today (6 January). DfE is updating the form to reflect the new national lockdown and will provide a further update shortly on when schools and colleges should resume completing it.

Guidance for the safe use of council buildings

Today (6 January), the Government has updated the guidance for those managing council buildings. It signposts to relevant guidance on a range of different activities that can take place in these buildings during the national lockdown in England.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>

Guidance for supported living services

The Government has today (6 January) updated the guidance for providers of supported living settings to reflect the national lockdown in England.

The guidance sets out:

- procedures that can be put in place to minimise risk and provide the best possible support to people in supported living settings

- safe systems of working including social distancing, respiratory and hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning
- how infection prevention and control (IPC) and personal protective equipment (PPE) applies to supported living settings

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-living-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Safer travel for passengers and operators

Yesterday (5 January), the Government updated the guidance for passengers and travel operators on how to work and travel safely during the national lockdown in England. The Government has also updated the guidance for drivers, operators and owners of taxis or private hire vehicles.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-taxis-and-phvs>

Where to find the latest information and guidance

Coronavirus

- Guidance for local councils and LRFs during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>
- Latest information on coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Coronavirus communication materials: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>
- FAQ from the Cabinet Office: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>
- Local restrictions tiers: what you need to know: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>
- Coronavirus cases: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- Previous MHCLG Coronavirus Bulletins: <https://bit.ly/3iC2Pnz>

EU transition

- Latest information on transition: <https://www.gov.uk/transition>
- Collection of guidance for local councils: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-government-brexit-preparedness>
- To sign up to.GOV email updates: [https://www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications/email-signup?related to brexit](https://www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications/email-signup?related%20to%20brexit)

For information purposes, previous Local Government Bulletins are available to view and download. Please be aware that guidance is updated frequently. To view and download: <https://bit.ly/2E4wKpp>

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