

Tier 4 and school openings

During a very busy and long day yesterday I joined on line conference calls with Health and Education Ministers and their senior officials to tackle issues about the pandemic response locally.

I was assured that computers will continue to be made available for on line at home learning where needed by qualifying families. Many have been supplied and more will be coming, as it is important that where an on line education is offered all have access to it.

Ministers confirmed that they do wish exams to go ahead this summer, with appropriate adjustments by Examining boards to take account of some pandemic disruption to normal learning. Year groups most affected by public exams will return soonest to school in January.

Ministers recognised that late changes to school opening dates and other arrangements are not ideal, but pointed out there has been a rapid acceleration in the spread of the virus and changes in NHS advice which has required some changes.

The NHS experts insisted that the only thing we can do prior to greater roll out of the vaccines is to cut down drastically on social contacts, other than those essential to work, food buying and other necessities. They were particularly worried about New Year celebrations.

I have not been notified of any worries about the way our local NHS is coping, and send my renewed thanks to all those NHS staff who are working hard to handle CV 19 cases.