

# Ofsted: phased return to inspections

Press release

Ofsted's return to inspection in 2021 will happen in phases, with no graded inspections for education or social care providers planned before the summer term.



Following the Secretary of State's announcement today, Ofsted is able to set out plans for its return to inspection in schools and further education providers – as well as plans for inspections and regulatory work in early years and social care.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

The usual level of scrutiny within the education and care system has been absent since last March, so it's important that it returns next year as we all hope for a greater level of normality. But we understand the pressure that everyone in education and social care is working under and we want to return to our usual work in a measured, sensitive and practical way.

We will not re-introduce graded inspections to schools and colleges before April. During the spring term, we will use supportive monitoring inspections to help those that most need it, focused on how well pupils and students are learning. Routine inspections in early years and social care are also planned for the summer term, but regulatory work will continue in the interim.

Our role is to offer the greatest assurance we can to parents and the public about the quality of education and care arrangements for children and learners. These plans will help us support the providers who are facing the greatest challenges during these difficult times. They will ensure that inspection is fair, safe and valuable, while remaining true to our core purpose and principles.

Over the coming months, Ofsted will discuss the approach to routine

inspection in 2021 with sector representatives and test it through a series of pilot visits, where necessary.

## **Maintained schools and academies**

- From January, we will resume monitoring inspections of schools judged inadequate at their previous inspection and some schools graded as requires improvement. These will not result in a grade.
- Emergency inspections of schools will continue as they have done throughout the pandemic, in response to any serious concerns raised with Ofsted.
- Routine inspections, which result in a school being awarded a new grade or being confirmed in its current grade, will resume in the summer term.

## **Independent schools**

- Throughout the spring term, all inspections will be at the request of the Department for Education (DfE).
- Routine inspections will resume in the summer term.

## **Further education and skills**

- From January, we will resume monitoring visits to providers that would be monitored in normal times, in particular those graded requires improvement and inadequate, and new providers.
- Colleges that do not receive a monitoring visit may receive support and assurance visits. Safeguarding visits will continue in response to concerns raised about providers.
- Full graded inspections will resume in the summer term.
- Interim education visits to prisons will start in January, to support and challenge prisons to return to full programmes of education and skills activities following COVID-19 restrictions.

## **Early years**

- We will carry out a programme of assurance inspections from the start of the spring term. These inspections will confirm whether or not a provider is meeting the early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements.
- Assurance inspections will be proportionate and risk-based. Providers will be prioritised based on the length of time since their last inspection, and any other relevant information.
- Routine graded inspections will resume in the summer term of 2021.

## **Children's social care**

- From January, we will resume focused visits to local authority children's services. These visits will not result in a graded judgement.
- Routine inspection under the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework will begin from April. We will prioritise inadequate local authorities that are ready for re-inspection, and authorities where there are concerns.
- We will continue with assurance visits under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) until April, when routine inspections will resume.

## **Area special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

- From January we will resume joint interim visits with the Care Quality Commission. These visits aim to support improvement and will not result in a published letter or graded judgement.

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# Joint Press Statement on Ukraine



Russia held a meeting at the UN today on what Russia claims is the status of the implementation of the Minsk agreements. This meeting was a transparent attempt to present a false and misleading narrative regarding the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We strongly reject Russia's premise that it is acting as a mediator within an internal conflict. Russia is an active participant that trains, arms, and leads armed formations in areas outside of Ukrainian government control, supplementing these proxy forces with military personnel and equipment. It instigated and continues to fuel a conflict which has resulted in approximately 13,000 deaths, appalling human rights abuses, and a deteriorating humanitarian situation for the civilian population.

We reiterate our support for the Minsk agreements and our firm commitment to see the peaceful resolution of the conflict with full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We welcome the steps taken by the Ukrainian government to make progress in resolving the conflict and call on Russia to act likewise.

We will continue to engage with all initiatives at the UN that support constructive ends. This event, designed purely to distort the realities of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, served Russian interests alone.

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## Foreign Secretary underlines UK commitment to NATO

- The Foreign Secretary spoke this week at the virtual NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting on the future of NATO.
- He underlined the strengths of the Alliance and the need for it to evolve to meet new challenges and take action against malicious state activity.
- The recent £24.1 billion increase in UK defence spending commitment cements our position as NATO's largest European contributor.

The Foreign Secretary has underlined his support for NATO this week, as he spoke to Allies across Europe and North America.

He also expressed strong support for the work of NATO's 'Reflection Process' Group whose report proposed concrete ways the Alliance could continue to adapt to face future challenges.

The Secretary General will now develop these recommendations into a package of proposals for leaders of NATO countries to consider at their next Summit in 2021.

The Foreign Secretary also used the Foreign Ministers' meeting to call for the Alliance to continue to take a collective voice against malicious state action, citing NATO's swift collective response on the Navalny poisoning as a leading example.

This meeting follows the announcement that the UK will increase defence spending by £24.1 billion over the next four years – the biggest single investment in UK defence capabilities since the Cold War. The budget cements the UK's position as the biggest European contributor to NATO, and the second biggest in the alliance. It will also allow the UK to maintain the wide spectrum of capabilities it offers to NATO, including the Carrier Strike Group.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

NATO is the most successful alliance in history and at a time when our adversaries are operating in the space between peace and war – launching cyber-attacks and spreading disinformation – it is more important than ever.

The UK supports NATO's work to continually adapt to face new threats and challenges. This includes responding to technological innovations, the threats from cyber and hybrid warfare and the need to combine our political and military tools to have the greatest

impact.

NATO Allies also discussed Russia's military build-up, the importance of effective arms control, China, NATO's training mission in Afghanistan and Black Sea security.

Allies were joined in some of these session by NATO Partners, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, Ukraine, Georgia, Sweden, Finland and the EU. The NATO 2030 report has now been published, outlining proposals for further reform of the alliance to address new and emerging security threats.

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## [Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 2 December 2020](#)

It is almost a year since humanity has been tormented by COVID

Across the world, economic output has plummeted and a million and a half people have died

And all the time we have waiting and hoping for the day when the searchlights of science would pick out our invisible enemy

And give us the power to stop that enemy from making us ill – and now the scientists have done it

And they have used the virus itself to perform a kind of biological jiu-jitsu, to turn the virus on itself in the form of a vaccine from an idea that was pioneered in this country by Edward Jenner in 1796

And today we can announce that the government has accepted the recommendation from the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to approve the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for distribution across the United Kingdom.

after months of clinical trials,

involving thousands of people

to ensure that the vaccine meets the strictest, internationally recognised, standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

Thanks to the fantastic work of Kate Bingham and the Vaccines Task Force,

we purchased more than 350 million doses of seven different vaccine candidates,

and the UK was the first country in the world to pre-order supplies of this Pfizer vaccine

securing 40 million doses.

Through our Winter Plan, the NHS has been preparing for the biggest programme of mass vaccination in the history of the UK.

And that is going to begin next week,

and in line with the advice of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

the first phase will include care home residents, health and care staff, the elderly and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable,

But there are immense logistical challenges:

the vaccine must be stored at minus 70 degrees

and each person needs two injections, three weeks apart.

So it will inevitably take some months before all the most vulnerable are protected,

Long and cold months

So it is all the more vital that as we celebrate this scientific achievement we are not carried away with over optimism

Or fall into the naïve belief that the struggle is over

Its not, we've got to stick to our Winter Plan,

a comprehensive programme to suppress the virus, protect the NHS and the vulnerable,

keep education and the economy going

and use treatments, testing and vaccines to enable us to return to much closer to normal by spring.

Today in England we have ended national restrictions, opening up significant parts of the economy in doing so;

but also replacing them with tough tiers to keep this virus down.

And I know that those tiers will mean continued hardship for many, and it is going to continue to be tough for some sectors

but until the vaccine is deployed, our plan does rely on all of us continuing

to make sacrifices to protect those we love.

So please, please continue to follow the rules where you live,

remember hands, face, space –

and if you live in a tier 3 area where community testing will be made available, please take part in that community testing.

Together, these steps are for now the surest way to protect yourselves and those you love

and by reducing the transmission of the virus, help de-escalate your area to a lower level of restrictions,

as vaccines and testing, as I say, take an ever larger share of the burden.

And as we do all this,

we are no longer resting on the mere hope that we can return to normal next year in the spring,

but rather on the sure and certain knowledge that we will succeed:

and together reclaim our lives and all the things about our lives that we love

So I want to thank the scientists and all those around the world who have taken part in the trials and got us to this stage

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

Students will be asked to stagger their return to universities after Christmas to help protect those around them and reduce transmission of Covid-19, the Government has announced today (Wednesday 2 December).

New [guidance](#) published by the Department for Education will set out how higher education providers should manage student returns over a five-week period according to the following:

- From 4 – 18 January, medical students, those on placements or practical courses with a need for in-person teaching should return in line with their planned start dates;
- The remaining courses should be offered online from the beginning of term so students can continue their studies from home; and
- From 25 January, all other students should start to return gradually



over a two-week period, and by 7 February all students are expected to have returned.

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. All universities will be offered testing facilities to give students two lateral flow tests, three days apart, with results turned around within an hour to help control the spread of the virus.

These measures will be crucial to manage returns carefully and protect students, staff and local communities while reducing disruption to education.

The Government has also announced a one-off fund of up to £20 million to help students most in need of support in these exceptional circumstances.

Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said:

The health and wellbeing of students, staff and local communities is always our primary concern and this plan will enable a safer return for all students. But we must do this in a way which minimises the risk of transmission.

I know students have had to make sacrifices this year and have faced a number of challenges, but this staggered return will help to protect students, staff and communities.

It is so important students have the support they need to continue their education, which is why we are providing up to £20 million funding for those facing hardship in these exceptional times.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We must use every tool at our disposal to stop the spread of the virus and help reduce the risks around students travelling back home this Christmas. Using new technology and the additional capacity we have built, we are now able to extend our testing offer to help manage this risk, by identifying those showing no symptoms who can infect people unknowingly and stop them from passing the virus on to others as they move around the country.

I encourage all students to play their part in bringing this virus under control by getting tested twice, and by following the restrictions in place when travelling to and from university this term.

Universities should tailor plans to best suit the needs of their own student population. They should also consider prioritising those who may need to return to campus earlier for other reasons such as students who do not have access to appropriate accommodation or study space.

The Government expects universities to maintain the quality, quantity and accessibility of their tuition. The Office for Students will be monitoring universities to ensure this happens.

The plans for the spring term follow those enabling students to return home for the Christmas break, with 126 universities offering mass testing for students before they leave in the 'travel window' between 3 – 9 December.

Mass testing will help break transmission among students especially when they may be asymptomatic. Students should restrict contact in the three days between their tests and if they receive a positive test they will have to self-isolate in their accommodation.

Universities should continue to provide additional support to students who are isolating to ensure they can access food and medical supplies if needed, along with mental health support.

Where available, students who have spent the winter break in Tier 3 areas where mass community testing is on offer should take a test before travelling back to university if possible.

Along with developments in mass testing using new rapid 'lateral flow' tests and other advances in medical technologies and protective measures, this should allow for a more normal spring term and a better experience for students and staff.