



Home Office

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Coronavirus-Sitrep

UPDATE – **No 69**. 19 March 2020

New information in RED

SUMMARY

Key Points/Top Lines:

- On 16 March, the PM announced changes to the existing COVID-19 guidance. Households where an individual has a temperature or a new or continuous cough are asked to isolate for 14 days. Asymptomatic individuals are asked to limit their social contact as much as possible. This is particularly important for those considered 'vulnerable' including the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, and pregnant women.
- On 18 March, the PM announced that all schools in England, Wales & Scotland will close on Friday afternoon (20 March). Schools in Northern Ireland will close from Monday 23 March. However, some schools will be kept open with a skeleton staff to provide support for the children of key workers.
- The exact definition of key worker and what this means for HO staff is being worked through.
- TfL have announced that from today (19 March) they will run a reduced service, which will enable London's critical workers to make essential journeys. Stations that do not interchange with other lines will be closed until further notice.
- As of 19 March 2020, a total of 64,581 people have been tested in the UK, 3,229 confirmed as positive in the UK, and 144 confirmed Covid-19 related deaths in the UK
- We have become aware that some individuals who have attended recent SAGE meetings in person have tested positive for Covid-19. **Please therefore be particularly vigilant for symptoms if you have attended recent SAGEs.**

CURRENT STRATEGY

Coronavirus Gold command group is primarily responsible for ensuring the welfare of our staff in the region and in the UK, the welfare of UK Nationals (UKN) and their families who are seeking to come to the United Kingdom and the integrity and security of our Border. Our strategy includes ensuring:

- The welfare of staff;
- The effective implementation of the current response;
- Full assessment of the departments readiness and capability to respond to any further increase in the scale and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) to other countries or to the UK;
- That the Home Office interests are understood by other policy or operational planners outside the Home Office;
- That senior decision makers in the Home Office are apprised of developments and able to contribute to key decisions;
- That we provide central point of contact for the link to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) as well as other key partners;
- The financial implications are understood.

FINANCE

- No further update

HUMAN RESOURCES/STAFF WELFARE

- The coronavirus hub has gone live on Horizon and provides the latest Home Office wide updates, guidance, and FAQs. HR are now working through implications of the PM's announcement re: school closures and will update the existing guidance documents accordingly.
- All operational areas across the Home Office are reporting instances of staff self-isolating.
- **2MS** – occupancy of the building has reduced significantly over the week. Both cafes will be closed but the restaurant will remain open but with a limited menu. All 3 government departments have agreed to adhere to PHE guidance in respect of cleaning areas where there are suspected cases.
- **Croydon** – a decision was made today (19 March) to shut Metro, Southern and Bernard Wetherill House and consolidate all operations into Lunar. Apollo House will also remain open.

- **North Region** – a number of buildings have been provided with hand sanitiser dispensers but as a result of limited stock not all sites will be equipped by 19 March.
- **South Region** – Becket House and Clive House are still awaiting the delivery of hand sanitisers. All other buildings have now been fitted with dispensers.
- **General** – a request to provide wet wipes to all offices via the FM suppliers is still being explored. MoJ Estates have reported that some landlords are refusing access for contractors to carry out planned preventative maintenance.

OVERVIEW OF CASES WORLDWIDE

Country	Confirmed cases	Overnight change	Fatalities	Overnight change
Mainland China	80928	(+13)	3245	(+11)
Italy	35713	(+3526)	2978	(+345)
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	17361	(+1178)	1135	(+135)
Spain	13716	(+1987)	598	(+182)
France	9043	(+1079)	244	(+27)
Republic of Korea	8565	(+93)	91	(+3)
Germany	8198	(+1144)	12	(-1)^
United States of America	7087	(+2861)	97	(+22)
United Kingdom	3229	(+643)	144	(+40)
Switzerland	2650	(+450)	21	(+5)
Netherlands	2051	(+292)	58	(+19)
Austria	1843	(+339)	5	(+0)
Belgium	1486	(+185)	14	(+0)
Norway	1423	(+0)	3	(+0)
Sweden	1279	(+108)	3	(+0)
Denmark	1057	(+17)	4	(+0)
Japan	914	(+44)	31	(+1)
Malaysia	900	(+237)	2	(+2)
Canada	690	(+121)	8	(+0)
Portugal	642	(+117)	1	(+1)
Czech Republic	572	(+81)	0	(+0)
Australia	565	(+79)	6	(+0)
Qatar	452	(+41)	0	(+0)
Brazil	428	(+137)	4	(+3)
Greece	418	(+0)	4	(+0)

Numbers as of 19/03/2020 10:00AM – source Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) SitRep 58

The full list of countries reporting cases can be found in an annex attached to the SitRep email.

UK CASES OVERVIEW

	Total number of people for whom tests concluded	Overnight change	Confirmed cases	Overnight change	Fatalities	Overnight change
England	51,616	4,774	2,756	574	135	36
Scotland	6,130	39	266	39	6	3
Wales	2,189	156	170	21	2	0
Northern Ireland	1,646	167	77	9	1	1
Total	64,621	5,136	3,269	643	142*	40

Numbers as of 19/03/2020 09:00AM – source Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) SitRep 58

*There may be small variances between the figure presented in the worldwide overview and UK cases overview.

UK CASES OVERSEAS

Country	Confirmed cases	Overnight change	Fatalities	Overnight change
Austria	1	+0	0	+0
France	6	+0	0	+0
Canada	1	+0	0	+0
Cambodia	3	+0	0	+0
Cruise Ships (Japan)	12	+0	1	+0
China	1	+0	0	+0
Colombia	1	+0	0	+0
Cyprus	3	+0	0	+0
Germany	1	+1	0	+0
Indonesia	1	+0	1	+0
Jamaica	3	+3	0	+0
Pakistan	3	+0	0	+0
Philippines	2	+0	0	+0
Poland	1	+0	0	+0
Saint Lucia	1	+1	0	+0
Senegal	1	+0	0	+0
Singapore	4	+2	0	+0
Spain	2	+0	0	+0
Switzerland	4	+0	0	+0
Vietnam	13	+0	0	+0
Total	62	+4	2	0

Numbers as of 19/03/2020 10:00AM – source Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) SitRep 58

- One UK National from the Diamond Princess remains hospitalised in Japan.

Emerging Issues for UK Nationals Overseas

Where borders and flights have closed whilst UK National visitors remain in the country but are trying to leave, posts are working to support the provision of commercial options to leave e.g. in Peru, Cyprus, Morocco & Egypt.

Country	UK Nationals affected	Date of last update	Update
Vietnam	304	17 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 304 UK Nationals are currently in quarantine. 15 UK Nationals are confirmed cases, one in a serious condition.
Maldives	9	17 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 9 UK Nationals are in quarantine in Farukolhu, resorts and other locations. Of these one UK National is confirmed to have COVID-19.

Norway	5	18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Norwegian authorities have quarantined 5 UK Nationals..
China	27	18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consular staff are monitoring 27 UK Nationals currently in quarantine.
Austria	14	18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 UK Nationals in Salzburg remain in isolation, 6 of whom have tested positive for COVID-19. Of these, one is in hospital in Salzburg and the other 5 have been moved to new accommodation in Zell am See and await re-testing.

International Conveyancing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from DfT on cruise numbers: 20 cruises ships confirmed, 13 to dock by 22nd March. 			
Ship/ Country	UK Nationals affected	Date of update	Update
Silver Shadow	108	18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being held in the port of Recife in Brazil for 14 days after two passengers tested positive for COVID-19. There are 108 UK Nationals on board. One UKN is in hospital with unconfirmed symptoms.
Silver Explorer	28	18 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 26 UKNs (22 passengers and 4 crew) on board, the ship is on its way to Puerto Montt in Chile where it will be placed in quarantine. Six crew and passengers have been moved to hospital as they have Covid-19, two are British.
Grand Princess	Unknown	19 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only BNs remaining are crew, company are arranging repatriation.
Regal Princess	Unknown	12 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cruise ship is being held offshore from Port Everglades (Florida) whilst two crew members are tested for Covid-19.
Braemar cruise ship	671	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All four repatriation flights have arrived in the UK and all passengers cleared BF controls at LHR. 2 passengers were treated as <i>potential</i> CV19 cases post-arrival and were therefore processed away from the PCP in line with procedures set out in our operating mandate. If non-symptomatic, the 5 FNs are due to leave the UK on flights to Belgium, Australia and New Zealand in the next few days.

RISK PICTURE AND TRIGGER POINTS

Risk to the UK population: **HIGH**.

- The Foreign Secretary made an announcement on 17 March advising British nationals against non-essential travel globally, initially for a period of 30 days.

SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

- Following further advice from SAGE, on 16 March, the PM announced changes to the existing COVID-19 guidance. Households where an individual has a temperature or a new or continuous cough are asked to isolate for 14 days. Asymptomatic individuals are asked to limit their social contact as much as possible. This is particularly important for those considered 'vulnerable' including the elderly, those with underlying health conditions, and pregnant women.
- On the basis of accumulating data, including on NHS critical care capacity, the advice from SAGE has changed regarding the speed of implementation of additional interventions.
- It is possible that there are 5,000-10,000 new cases per day in the UK (great uncertainty around this estimate).
- UK cases may be doubling in number every 5-6 days.
- The risk of one person within a household passing the infection to others within the household is estimated to increase during household isolation, from 50% to 70%.
- On 18 March, SAGE considered the impacts of school closures and regional 'lockdowns' for areas further ahead in the UK epidemic, for example London. The outcomes of this meeting informed the decisions made at the Ministerial COBR (held at 1600, 18 March).

POWERS

COVID-19 Parliamentary Bill

Subject to PBL clearance, the Bill is expected to be laid on 19 March with the aim of securing Royal Assent by 31 March.

BORDER FORCE – DOMESTIC UK RESPONSE

- UK National dependents visa waiver requests - 95 received to date (18 March)
- French and Belgian borders closure for non-essential travel. BF staff considered essential and authorities being resolved by Regional Director. Freight should not be affected.
- NBTC seeking Police agreement that they can conduct movement checks on behalf of the Police. NBTC remain available to provide data and support PHE regarding tracing passengers most at risk from identified cases.
- Enhanced monitoring arrangements (EMAs) in place: inflight messages and leaflets to passengers (encouraging reporting of illness); public health posters in airports; early warning of passenger illness or formal declaration of passenger health via General Airline Declaration (GAD); PHE port health team at LHR; local health protection teams to meet planes if required.
- Border Force is progressing with additional 'seasonal workforce' deployments to ports from this weekend in anticipation of greater staff abstraction levels. Similarly, BF are working with IE and HMRC on deployment of trained resource at priority ports.
- Strategic directive covering operational priorities and structures is with the Home Secretary for clearance, which is expected this weekend.

POLICY

- Policy considerations for the medium to long term are currently being worked up across relevant business areas and will be the subject of future advice.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

- 22 IEI staff are currently in isolation, none have been diagnosed with COVID 19.
- On 19 March the FCO is seeking authority to drawdown staff from sub-Saharan Africa. This will impact on IEI posts in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa.
- Most IEI staff have been displaced from their offices, due either to evacuation, self-isolation or locally-imposed restrictions
- 18 Clandestine events (29 people) in the last 24 hours as at 12:00. 0 individuals symptomatic.
- No known cases of Covid-19 across the detention estate but four suspected cases at Brook House and a significant but manageable number in protective isolation elsewhere. The Heathrow IRCs remain in quarantine due to a suspected flu outbreak until 23rd
- Transport and detention of symptomatic migrants remain an issue – work is ongoing with UKVI, ICE Bronzes, DES Bronze and BF to resolve.

UKVI (includes ASYLUM and OVERSEAS VISAS)

- IOM and UNHRC have suspended resettlement activity. This combined with the flight restrictions from all countries means we cannot resettle during March. All planned March arrivals have been stood down, we are still receiving transfers from Greece and France.

- NAAU unable to source laptops with a number of staff saying they won't be in next week so will not be able to manage intake.
- Correspondence is meeting service standards with the exception of Complaints (90% compared to 84% at the same time last week) and MPs Correspondence (74% compared to 75% at the same time last week). Correspondence intake is beginning to drop.
- The Brent Cross facility is now due to go live on Friday morning. This will be used, following PHE guidance, for asylum seekers needing asylum accommodation but having symptoms of COVID 19 in order to facilitate their isolation.

Visa and Citizenship

- VACs in China will now remain closed until at least 30 March 2020. VACs in Jordan and Malaysia are now closed and we anticipate the closure of the biometric enrolment facilities managed by Immigration New Zealand on our behalf in Wellington.
- Work is on-going to develop a clear policy position on refunds for customers who have been unable to travel and those who still wish to travel but whose vignettes have expired/will expire soon – this relates particularly to those issued 30 day vignettes in order to travel to the UK to collect their BRP (we are aware of c1000 customers in China in this position).

HMPO

Passport Operations

- Marginal WIP increase yesterday, but overall demand trending significantly down on forecast. Output levels also trending down to a similar extent. Belfast have opened a skeleton Fast Track 5-day counter service, 4 interview offices have scaled back service due to staff losses.
- Passports - compared to same day last week intake is down 19% and output down 28% resulting in a WIP decrease of 32% to 88,898.

General Register Office

- Local Registration Service – all services are reporting reductions in staff of up to 50%+ due to social/self-isolation. Majority of services have now moved to Pandemic Phase 1 planning which includes deferring all non-priority business such as birth registrations, marriage/CP notices, citizenship ceremonies and are focusing on death registrations.
- Places of worship weddings – a growing number of religious bodies are no longer offering banns/marriages and this is having a direct impact on the Local Registration Services as couples look to change to Civil weddings at a time when services are scaling back.
- GRO - compared to previous day WIP continues to be down 5% to 35,828. Performance is down 35% against forecasted budget.

POLICING & FIRE

- National Police Leads are reviewing the capability of forces to manage concurrent events (Bridges, Riots or act of terrorism). There is likely to be significant challenges in the event of concurrency, if staff abstraction rates increase due to COVID-19, even accounting for the potential of military support.
- NPCC Civil Contingencies Lead, Martin Hewitt, is leading on the response for the police. A police Gold group meeting now takes place on a weekly basis.
- The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) business continuity plans indicate that all fire and rescue authorities would be able to operate at a reduced capacity for some time – i.e. maintaining 25% (or 35% in main conurbations) to maintain critical services in the absence of some 65% of staff.
- Each FRS would protect delivery of its emergency 999 response function by progressively dropping non-emergency work.

- SAGE consider that in the event of a pandemic, large scale rioting is unlikely but that public disorder events could happen where there are perceptions that Government's response strategies are not effective.
- Urgent work is underway with other government departments on the implications for police and fire of possible restrictions on mass gatherings.

Community Tensions

- The Police National Community Tensions Team (NCTT) continue to observe increased levels of offences targeting those of Chinese, Japanese or South East Asian heritage (IC5). A total of 47 offences targeting people of Chinese or perceived Chinese heritage were recorded in the period 28/02/2020 – 05/03/2020, an increase of 17 on the previous reporting period.
- Every week since the 10th February, Chinese nationals have appeared in the top three victim nationalities reported. Chinese nationals only appeared in the top three nationalities once in 2019.
- Police analysis continues to identify some targeting of other ethnicities in relation to the use of 'coronavirus'. There were 43 offences which were recorded to have utilised the term 'coronavirus'. 31 offences are mix of IC1, IC4, IC6 and unknown ethnicity. 12 offences are IC5. The NCTT assess there is likely to be under-reporting of hate crime incidents.
- Media reporting of racist offences have continued with national and local media reporting on incidents in Exeter, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Swansea and Portsmouth.
- Nationally, police forces reported of increased tensions targeting Chinese and South East Asian in multiple regions across England and Wales. These manifest in forced exclusion from public and social places, random and targeted verbal abuse and some violent incidents.
- To mitigate further incidents, police forces have been advised to consider proactively engaging with their local affected communities, and to report and respond to issues at the earliest opportunity.

OVERSEAS / INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- From midday 17 March, the EU and Schengen border closed - travel between EU and non-EU countries was be suspended. This does not include the UK.
- The French closed the Franco British border at 05:00 GMT on 18 March 2020. This refers to the juxtaposed frontier only and not flights from the UK to France. Freight movements are unaffected and that there are 5 other exceptions: cross-border workers, small Freight (van) transiting through the tourist controls, personnel on health missions, persons ordinarily resident in France (British or other), and people who have to transit through France to reach their home country (German, Spanish etc).
- We have been alerted that the French are planning to restrict their Friday evacuation flights from Peru to the EU to Schengen nationals only, specifically excluding UK (and potentially Irish) nationals on the basis that non-Schengen nationals would not be able to leave French/Schengen zone on arrival in France. This is inconsistent with EU communication of 16 March restrictions and touches on interpretation of border guidelines. We are monitoring situation and HMA is in touch with UKMis directly.
- From 21:00 local time on Friday 20 March, Australia will deny entry to all non-Australian citizens or permanent residents. The decision was taken in consultation with New Zealand who are also closing their borders to non-citizens/permanent residents.
- From Friday morning (00:00 local) 20 March anyone who has been in UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain or Switzerland in the last 14 days will not be allowed to enter or transit Indonesia.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE

- Work is underway to develop external communications on safeguarding. This will cover individuals volunteering in their local communities during the social distancing, with advice on what activities can be undertaken without requiring a DBS check.
- A proposal to commence provisions within the 1997 Police Act to expedite DBS checks for returning health professionals and emergency volunteers has been agreed by Ministers, and will be managed by secondary legislation. This change will also make the checks free of charge.

COMMUNICATIONS and SOCIAL MEDIA

Home Office Press Office update 19/03:

Press / Media

- Coverage today focused on the announcement that schools will be closed indefinitely from Friday, with many outlets further reporting on an anticipated total lockdown of London.
- An op-ed is carried in the Express from former Met Police Chief Lord Stevens, calling for retired police officers to come forward and make the difference during the coronavirus crisis. The Independent also notes that the police will be forced to enact a “graduated withdrawal of services” from their normal duties if the outbreak worsens.
- The Telegraph reports that fraudsters are using coronavirus scams to target the elderly. Police chiefs say people are knocking on the door offering to buy food for the elderly and claiming to be Government officials, then taking their money and not returning. Durham Police also confirmed that parents had been getting emails offering meals for pupils, then asking for bank details.
- Press Office is receiving an increasing number of media queries related to Covid-19. Calls today include the Guardian on Unaccompanied Child Asylum seekers and the potential impact of coronavirus, and BBC News on ongoing detentions immigration removal centres. We are working with policy colleagues to agree lines.
- Press Office is working with policy colleagues to expand the Home Office core Q&A.
- We are creating a factsheet on DBS checks for volunteers, which will be published on gov.uk.

Strat Comms

- PHE content being delivered to ports today
- BF stakeholder comms sent last night on Emergency Bill highlighting port closures
- The External Affairs team are working with press and policy colleagues to consider the impact of COVID-19 and isolation measures on support services and victims, and comms engagement with Domestic Abuse/ VAWG charities.

Internal Comms

- Daily G7 and SCS dial ins

Cabinet Office Communication Cell update, 19 March 2020 (AM): (selected content)

Domestic

- From today London's Underground system will be partially closed. Up to 40 tube stations will be closed until further notice. Whitehall sources say the Govt is considering closing most shops in the capital by the weekend.
- The MOD is creating a 20,000-strong coronavirus support force to help the NHS and police deal with the scale of the crisis. Reservists could be called up and 150 military personnel will begin training to drive oxygen tankers.
- Exams have been cancelled and schools across the country are preparing to close tomorrow afternoon for the foreseeable future. Classes will still go ahead for key workers' children, including NHS staff and delivery drivers.

Disinformation

- The **European Medicines Agency** stated that there is no scientific evidence showing that Ibuprofen, the widely used anti-inflammatory drug, worsens the effects of coronavirus. Adding that it wanted to dispel incorrect information circulating on social media.
- Text messages and pictures have spread rapidly on WhatsApp claiming that the **British** army had been deployed on the streets of London ahead of a lockdown. Some messages were accompanied by images apparently showing “evidence that the UK military are on the way to enforce a lockdown”.

Economic impact

- **Vodafone**, stated that the Covid-19 crisis was causing data traffic on its networks to surge, with demand already rising 50% in some markets. Vodafone also announced a plan to maintain network service and provide capacity for critical government functions in Europe, adding that it expected data use to continue to increase.
- The **UK's oil and gas sector** needs financial help to survive, industry body OGUK stated, as the oil price crash triggered by Covid-19 and a Saudi-Russian price war means they may be unable to keep producing

hydrocarbons in the North Sea. Benchmark oil prices fell to around \$25 a barrel, their lowest level in 17 years, as measures to tackle the virus outbreak have had a drastic impact on demand.

- **Ryanair** expects to ground most if not all of its flights from 24 March. A very small number may remain between Britain and Ireland to maintain essential connectivity.
- **EasyJet** have launched an early sale on cut-price winter 2020-21 flights. Customers can book flights for GBP £29.99 one way to any discounted destination between 25 October and 28 February 2021, under the week-long offer, which opened on Wednesday.

Insight

Public online interest in coronavirus is broadly the same (5% decrease) as yesterday. Popular new narratives from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube cover:

- **UK schools to close from Friday** (728% higher than average engagement). Top comments support the decision to close schools, though some argue that closing schools is not enough, saying that the UK should be mass-testing and that children of food retail staff should be classed as 'vital workers', too. Searches for 'what are key worker jobs' have increased.
- **Supermarkets** (30% higher than average engagement). Top comments are generally critical of panic buying mentality. Posts from **Tesco's** and **Sainsbury's** on social media, which introduce new limits on products across their stores from today, have been positively received.
- **Business response** (64% higher than average engagement). Top articles cover different actions taken by large businesses to help during the coronavirus effort. Top comments under each article are overwhelmingly positive and praise the individual businesses.
- **Search:** Searches for coronavirus have decreased very slightly, with slight hourly fluctuations. UK searches are 5% lower than this time yesterday, and 20% lower than this time last week. Interest peaked on Tuesday 17. Top searches are 'coronavirus symptoms', 'coronavirus cases' and 'coronavirus news'

Polling:

- Overall **public concern about coronavirus continues to grow - 42% are now extremely or very worried, up from 39% the previous day and 19% at this time last week.** Concern is growing most quickly amongst **women - 51% are now very or extremely concerned** (this is borne out in groups where women who are caring for older relations speak of their worry). **18-24s remain least likely to worry** (34% are not at all or not very worried) - and hence potentially least likely to follow social distancing messages
- **60% think it poses a major or significant risk to the UK, almost double 33% at this time last week and up from 57% yesterday**
- **30% now think it poses a major or significant risk to them and 34% that the risk is minor or non-existent**, giving a net personal concern figure of -4, up from -7 yesterday and -22 last week.
- On the new measure added yesterday, **37% agree that gov't is putting the right measures in place to protect the economy (up from 32% yesterday) and 28% disagree (down from 32% yesterday).**
- Other about how gov't is handling CV are largely static on yesterday, but continuing the trend towards greater polarisation that we've seen over the past week. for example:
- **38% agree that the gov't is putting right steps in place to tackle CV and , 33% disagree** (this time last week, 33% agreed and 26% disagreed).
- **86% now say that they know what they have to do to limit their risk of catching CV, up from 80% yesterday. 86% also say that they are aware of specific guidance on self isolation . 36% say that they are very well informed about what social distancing is and 50% that they are fairly well informed** (new questions added yesterday). We know from focus groups that there is confusion about detail of these messages.
- Social behaviours - headlines include:
- **9% are still going to bars as much as usual, 17% are still going, but less, 45% have stopped and 29% never went** (NB, those going as often as previously may only go infrequently already - we don't currently ask about frequency)
- 17% are still seeing family who don't live with them and 14% friends as often as before, 40% have cut down on seeing family and 42% have cut down seeing friends, 27% have stopped seeing family and 30% have stopped seeing friends
- **35% are still going to work as often as before (59% of full time workers)**
- 6% claim to be either self isolating or isolating with members of their household. 20% know someone who is self isolating

- support for closing schools is rising - 43% think they should close (up from 40% yesterday) and 33% that they should not (down from 39%). Those with children in their house are much more likely to agree (56% of those with children under 16). 85% think closure will happen.
- Further questions on which scenarios people most support for school closure and found that:
- 45% support closure for the whole summer term
- 42% support closure for the whole summer term and postponing exams
- 39% support closure for summer term and exams going ahead / students taking exams coming in
- 16% of those with school age children have stopped their children going to school

PARLIAMENTARY INTEREST

- 7 COVID-19 related PQs were received today.

TECHNOLOGY, DDAT & IT

- Number of VPN connections at 08:30 today (19 March) was c9,000, rising to 16,013 by 11:00. At 11:00 yesterday (18 March), the figure was 13,276 – so we are seeing a steady increase since the PM'S 16 March WFH advice.
- Fixes to improve stability have been implemented. These should comfortably be able to accommodate 26,000 users with the capacity for more if required. At 08:30 on the 18 March, 11 to 12 crashes had been seen but there have been no crashes today (19 March) so far.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date	Event
Every Mon, Wed, Fri	DHSC Sitrep Meeting
Every Wed & Fri	COBR (Officials)
Twice Weekly	SAGE
23 rd March	Covid 19 OQs

Departmental Operations Centre (DOC): Contact Details

During DOC active hours (0700-2030, Monday to Friday / 0830-1630 Saturday and Sunday)

For all queries please email the DOC inbox in the first instance
(DepartmentalOperationsCentre@homeoffice.gov.uk).

[All start with I&S
 For **urgent** information or situational queries – I&S
 For **urgent** briefing queries – I&S
 For matters requiring **urgent** escalation or DOC response – I&S

Please be aware that any requests/actions for by the DOC over the phone will need to be followed up via email for our records

Outside of DOC active hours (2030-0700, Monday to Friday / 1630-0830 Saturday and Sunday)

The DOC inbox is not proactively monitored outside of DOC active hours. If you have an issue requiring an out of hours response then please call:

[All start with I&S
 DOC Silver in the first instance – I&S
 DOC Gold in the second instance

Otherwise please send all queries to the DOC inbox (DepartmentalOperationsCentre@homeoffice.gov.uk) and it will be picked up during DOC active hours.