

Scenario 1: Schools are back, but the picture is challenging

- It is September 14, schools and colleges have been open for two weeks. Incidence rose gradually through August but has been steady through September.
- **Despite attendance being mandatory**, over 1/3 of children are not attending due to parents’ concerns about safety. Some local authorities are not collecting non-attendance fines, believing it targets the most vulnerable unfairly.
- On 28th August, France and five other countries were removed from the exempt list. A number of children and teachers have been isolating and have not returned to school.
- Unions have recommended teachers who were previously shielding to stay at home. Unions also criticise HMG position on face coverings.
- **Transport is particularly difficult.** Many students in London have been arriving 2-3 hours late, as social distancing has meant public buses are over-capacity. Some students in rural areas can’t get in at all.
- Following a number of school outbreaks, many teachers are self-isolating after being picked up through contract tracing.



England	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Autumn Term	Autumn Term	Autumn Term
Overall pupil absence rate	4.29%	4.93%	35.23%

Illustrative

Actions to take

- + Comms to build confidence among parents and young people and stress development and wellbeing benefits of attending education
- + Further funding to support transport demand management, and/or further coach procurement, capacity allowing.
 - + Work with LAs to impose fines on parents whose children are not attending.

Delivery issues

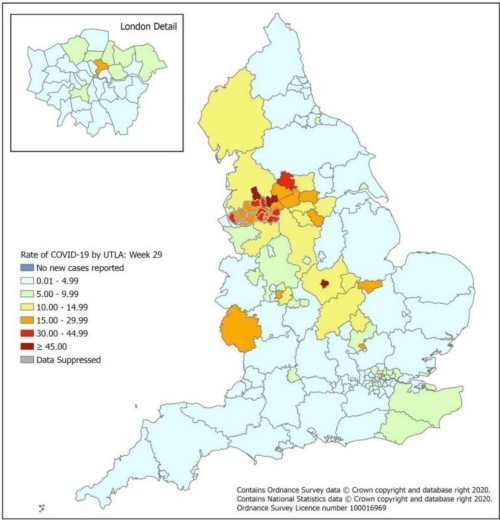
- Comms campaign already taken place, with limited impact in this scenario.
- Gains from transport demand management and/or coach capacity may already be maxed out.

Questions

- Q Shall we explore options to enable central government to ensure LAs are collecting fines?
- Q Would you relax social distancing requirements on public transport or further fund other more radical school transport methods e.g underwriting taxis? Or encourage more WFH to reduce demand? Would you want to be more directive in staggering school start times in areas of concern?
- Q Can we target any excess testing capacity to manage outbreaks and support schools?
- Q Should we consider a change of position on face coverings, to enable anyone who wants to wear a covering to do so?

Scenario 2: Local restrictions - Bradford

- It is September 14. In Bradford, restrictions are in place on social contact and some higher risk settings (eg hospitality) have been closed.
- Nationally, schools have been open for two weeks, and Ministers decided to open schools in Bradford. However, **Bradford Council has directed maintained schools to stay closed for most pupils**, in the belief that schools cannot safely reopen at current incidence levels. The current uptick in cases is unrelated to schools.
- This has further impacted parental confidence, and many **parents have opted not to send their children to the local academies which have opened. Some academies, while remaining open, have moved to rotas.**



Actions to take

- + Use DfE SoS's powers in the Coronavirus Act to force schools to reopen.
- + Engage local authority leaders where measures have been imposed to reassure on safety of school opening
- + Scale up targeted communications campaign to further address parental and youth concerns, and build confidence.

Bradford State Schools*		Academy	Maintained	Special school	All
Primary	All	80	91	4	175
	Closed	5	89	0	94
Secondary	All	27	7	7	41
	Closed	4	7	3	14

**illustrative September 14 figures*

Delivery issues

- Unions may object and staff may refuse to attend
- If shielding is reintroduced, some teachers will need to stay at home
- Schools and colleges say they need 3-4 weeks to operationalise new guidance and prepare for rotas. We have not asked schools to plan for this.
- We are not confident in the quality and universal availability of remote learning in the rota model.

Questions

- Q How quickly are you willing to use DfE SoS' powers in the Coronavirus Act to force schools to open to all pupils?
- Q Do you want to explore options whereby we could direct the schools that have preemptively moved to rotas to fully open?
- Q Do you agree that if incidence in Bradford continued to rise, we should move through DfE's tiered response? Do you want us to develop a set of incidence thresholds to trigger a move between tiers?
- Q Are you prepared to publish the plan for rotas now so that schools can prepare?

Proposed DfE tiers on contingencies for schools
** remote learning provision for any pupils not in school*

Tier 1	All schools fully open
Tier 2	Secondary schools on 2 week 50% rota. Primaries open
Tier 3	Secondary schools open for priority years, key workers and vulnerable children. Primaries open
Tier 4	Secondary and primary open for priority years, key workers and vulnerable children

Scenario 3: Incidence is rising nationally

- It is September 7 and schools and colleges have been open for up to one week.
- ONS data shows a significant increase in infections, triggering the threshold for national intervention. Testing indicates that incidence could be over [20 cases per 100k] nationally, a threshold to consider moving to National Alert level 4.
- In late August, you strengthened restrictions on social contact nationally to reduce the spread of the virus.
- The spread has not yet abated. Further action is needed to reduce the spread of the virus.

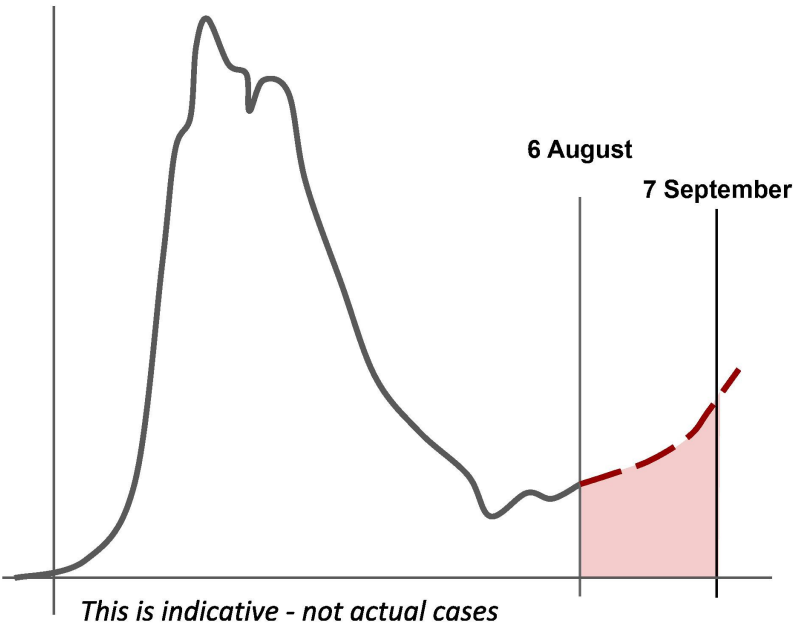
Action

- + Impose regional or national measures such as the closure of close contact and high risk premises (such as pubs and gyms) to keep schools open
- + Review whether secondary schools and colleges should move to a rota system, in addition to non-education NPIs
- + Primary schools & early years settings remain open in any scenario
- + [Parents of school age children could work from home if possible to break links between networks]
- + [Two-week stay at home half-term as a ‘firebreak’ on infection]

Delivery

- **Timing** - Schools and colleges say they need 3-4 weeks to operationalise new guidance and prepare for rotas. We have not asked schools to plan for this.
- **Remote provision** - Country-wide rota systems would require more devices than DfE has available and some secondary school children would therefore be unable to learn in the weeks they were
- Parents may have to stay home on ‘off weeks’ on a rota, causing further issues with the return to work.

Illustrative UK Covid-19 cases



Questions

- Q Would you consider preemptive action - such as restrictions on social contact or the closure of higher risk indoor settings - before schools return, if incidence is rising?
- Q Shall we consider national thresholds for implementing the rota system for all secondary schools and colleges, and should these align to the JBC triggers for national intervention?