

EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

2025/26

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Gareth Webb	
Date of next review	November 2026

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Gareth Webb
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Rachael Beattie
Exams officer	Michael Batty
SENCo	Rachael Beattie

Contents

Key staff involved in the plan.....	2
Purpose of the plan.....	5
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process	5
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)	5
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	8
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	8
4. Cyber-attack	9
5. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues at short notice.....	10
6. Failure of IT systems	10
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	11
8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period.....	11
9. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open	11
10. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period.....	12
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	12
12. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts	12
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	13
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services.....	14
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning.....	15
Ofqual	15
JCQ.....	18
GOV.UK	19
Wales.....	19
Northern Ireland	19
National Cyber Security Centre	20

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Park School Teaching Service. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan also confirms Park School Teaching Service's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Planning • annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered • annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines • Review of exam policies •	The work of the exam officer is overseen by the Academy Lead who will act in the exam officers absence. • information gathering & information sharing (internal) to be collated • Annual exam plan (key tasks checklist – see contingency folder)	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team (SLT) • Academy Lead (AL) • Exam officers (EO) • Teachers (T)

	• Exam hub meeting to update policies if required	
Entries • awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff • candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment • awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred	• Confirm from awarding body administrative guidance how early/estimated entries should be submitted • In the contingency folder is a step by step 'how to' guide on entering candidates EO to over see • Identify the key dates in September relating to any qualification being taken at Bolton Impact Trust (AL)	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers • Teachers
Pre-exams • invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams • exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared • candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates • confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions • internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators	• Eos or ALs within the trust will diary training before the start of the summer series (April) • Eos or ALs to send out exam timetables by Easter. In the contingency folder is a step by step 'how to' guide on timetables for the candidates • Eos or ALs will allocate rooms and invigilators within the daily sheet/morning briefing • All Teachers are aware of the requirements for securing exam/assessment materials. The key holders will have access to the examination room Eos or ALs	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers • Teachers • SENCO leads

	• In the contingency folder is a step by step 'how to' guide on entering assessment marks for candidates Teachers to oversee • The SENCO team would apply for all access arrangements and modified papers. In the contingency folder is a step by step 'how to' guide on applying for access arrangements	
Exam time • exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies • required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration • candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies	• The exams rooms will be set out by Eos or Teachers as prescribed by the awarding bodies. Each room will have a box with all the relevant posters, equipment, etc. • The lead invigilator (ALs) will submit any reports during the exam period. All reporting documents are kept in a folder in the exam room for easy access • During the summer series the postman makes daily collections, until the office inform them of the last examination. For any other series contact https://collections.parcelforce.net/dfe	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers • Teachers • Office staff
Results and post-results • access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates • the facilitation of the post-results services	• In the contingency folder is a step by step 'how to' guide on downloading results EOs to oversee	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers • Teachers

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Planning • candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements • centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 • evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated Pre-exams • approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body • centre-delegated arrangements not put in place • modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline • staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained Exam time • access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms	• Pupils are identified and tested by the AA tester Rachael Beattie overseen by SENCo and Exam Officer • Bolton Impact has a disability policy for exams, all staff are aware of the policy and the roles they have. • Teachers record evidence of normal way of working regularly and any observations or adjustments made in mock examinations are recorded. • ALs will allocate rooms and invigilators within the daily sheet/morning briefing	• Academy Leads • Exam Officer • SENCo • Learning Mentors

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
• Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received	• The ALs and EOs should be informed immediately if a teacher is planning to change exam board. Within Bolton Impact Trust, most subject areas have hubs, this is where information regarding exam entries are discussed	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers

• Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies • Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled • Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking • Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines	• Within Bolton Impact Trust, most subject areas have hubs, and this is where information regarding exam entries is discussed. The final decision will be the Academy Lead or SMT • The SLT of the trust will arrange supply cover or a member of the teaching staff within the trust to complete any assessment tasks missing • Exam Officer to contact the awarding body to seek advice.	• Teachers
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4. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
• Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery	Contact SICT : • Enact your incident management plan • Report to the NCSC: https://report.ncsc.gov.uk/ • Contact your local law enforcement and Action Fraud: https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/ • Inform the DfE by emailing: sector.securityenquiries@education.gov.uk	• ALs • SICT (332034) • Exam officers

5. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning - Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days - Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time	- The planning of exams will be discuss with the SLT at least a month before the exam series. - If the exam block is full, a whole Academy trip will be organised, enabling more rooms to be available - Bolton Impact Trust is made up of several academies. It has been agreed that the other academies would house exams if our venue is unavailable	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
- MIS system failure at final entry deadline - MIS system failure during exams preparation - MIS system failure at results release time	- Exam Officer to enter pupils 1 week before the deadline to ensure the system can be fixed if broken. School to contact SICT. - Contact SICT - Contact SICT, access results via the exam board online systems	- ALs - SICT (332034) - Exam officers

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams	Candidates would be transported to one of the Academics in Bolton Impact Trust or the central team office. Special consideration would be applied for all candidates.	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning	- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of Bolton Impact Trust to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. - In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. Bolton Impact Trust will have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

9. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal	- Candidates would be transported to one of the Academics in Bolton Impact Trust. Special consideration would be applied for all candidates. - Staff across the trust who have been trained can invigilate	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

10. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations	- Candidates would be transported to one of the Academics in Bolton Impact Trust. Special consideration would be applied for all candidates. - Staff across the trust who have been trained can invigilate any exams	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations	- Exam Office to inform all relevant exam bodies and arrange the delivery to : Park School Teaching Service 33-35 Chorley New Road BL1 4QR - Papers can be downloaded electronically on the day of the exam.	

12. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence - The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.	where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service Parcel Force Worldwide 0344 561 7998 or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and should not make their own	- Academy Lead - Exam officers

	arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body - for any examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations. - centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.)	
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13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked - Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations	- The Academy Lead and Exam office to inform relevant awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations - Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.	- Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team - Academy Lead - Exam officers - Teachers

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan	Bolton Impact Trust Strategy	Staff Involved
• Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services • Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]	• After contacting the awarding bodies, results will be available from : Park School Teaching Service 33-35 Chorley New Road BL1 4QR Park School Staff or Connexions will be available to deliver their results to home addresses.	• Bolton Impact Trusts Senior Leadership Team • Academy Lead • Exam officers • Teachers

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [bomb threats](#) procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also the [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.

3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)

Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA Regulation](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2021 to 2022 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2021 and summer 2022.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

(Ofqual guidance extract above taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** (last updated 30 September 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>)

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at:

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency days' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations** 2022-2023 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ notice - Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

Wales

School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - exceptional closure of schools www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

ProtectUK

www.protectuk.police.uk

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)