

[Letter to local authority RPs: Data requirements for 2021-2022](#)

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[Letter to registered providers: Data requirements for 2021-2022](#)

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[UK agrees fishing catch limits with EU and Norway](#)

The UK has today (16 March 2021) reached agreement with Norway and the European Union on catch limits in 2021 for six jointly-managed fish stocks in the North Sea.

The agreement promotes the sustainable management and long-term viability of cod, haddock, plaice, whiting, herring, and saithe stocks in the North Sea. The catch levels agreed for 2021 are worth over £184 million to the UK fishing industry.

This is the first time the UK has participated in the talks as an independent coastal State. Throughout negotiations the UK has pressed for catch limits – known as total allowable catches – to be set sustainably to ensure the long-

term future of the fisheries industry.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

Today we successfully concluded the first trilateral fisheries negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway.

As an independent coastal state we are committed to managing our fisheries sustainably, to the benefit of the fishing industry across the UK and our marine environment, now and in the years to come.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

For the first time in decades we have concluded our first trilateral negotiations with the EU and Norway as an independent coastal state.

The outcome represents an increase in the total allowable catch of certain key stocks for Scotland – such as Haddock and Whiting.

Agreements have also been made which safeguard the long-term viability of some other key stocks such as cod.

We remain committed to supporting the industry and being a champion for our coastal communities on the world stage.

Of the stocks jointly-managed with the EU and Norway, five out of six have been set in line with or lower than the catch level advised by ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. This results in catch reductions for North Sea cod (-10%), plaice (-2%), saithe (-25%) and herring (-7.4%) compared with 2020, but increases in haddock (+20%) and whiting (+19%).

The agreed catch limit for haddock is well within the sustainable limits advised by the scientific body ICES. This will encourage the recovery of other key stocks in the North Sea mixed fishery.

North Sea cod will be subject to a slightly smaller reduction than the -16.5% recommended by ICES. The three parties supported this approach as it would allow the stock to recover at a similar pace to that set out in the scientific advice. Furthermore, the catch limit is accompanied by the UK's ongoing [cod avoidance plan](#) which applies to all vessels in UK waters. The plan establishes measures to support the long-term recovery of the stock in UK waters, these include 'real-time closures' to protect high abundances of cod and selective fishing gear.

The UK Government has worked closely throughout the negotiations with the Scottish Government and other administrations to reach this consensus.

This trilateral agreement marks the conclusion of the first in a series of annual fisheries negotiations. Bilateral negotiations are underway with the EU, Faroes Islands and Norway to confirm access arrangements and quota exchanges, where applicable.

Millions of students back in class

Over seven million children were back in schools and colleges last week, as [new data](#) released today (Tuesday 16 March) shows the full scale of national school returns.

Primary schools opened to all pupils on Monday 8 March, and as of Monday 15 March, 94% of children were back in the classroom with their teachers and friends.

Secondary schools had the option to stagger the return of their students over the week beginning 8 March to help facilitate testing for students before they returned to education.

As of 15 March, 89% of secondary school pupils were in school, the highest rate of attendance since the start of the pandemic.

The asymptomatic rapid testing programme is helping stop outbreaks in their tracks and reducing transmission within schools.

Students, school staff and families can have confidence in the lateral flow tests used in the rapid testing programme, after new analysis published last week found the tests result in fewer than one false positive for every 1,000 tests carried out.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It is fantastic to see the overwhelming majority of children have now returned to the classroom, with all the benefits that face-to-face contact with their teachers and friends is proven to bring.

I do not underestimate the preparation that has taken place to ensure our children could return safely and continue with their education and I am so grateful to the teachers and school staff who have made the transition so seamless – as well as managing testing and maintaining all the wider protective measures still in place to help keep everyone safe.

The rapid testing programme in secondary schools and colleges is in place to help find the people who have the virus but who, in one in three cases, do not have symptoms.

After the first three tests have been taken in school or college, students will be provided with tests to use at home on a twice-weekly basis.

Parents and carers of all primary and secondary school children should test themselves via twice-weekly home tests, as the government continues to encourage everyone eligible to access testing to help break chains of transmission and reduce cases of the virus.

Rigorous safety measures remain in place in schools and colleges, including maintaining distance between staff and students where possible, good ventilation and regular hand washing.

Secondary school and college students are also being asked to wear face coverings indoors wherever social distancing cannot be maintained as an additional safety measure, until a review at Easter.

Data published today also shows the department has delivered just under 1.3 million devices, helping children and young people across the country while they were learning remotely and supporting schools with technology for the months and years to come.

All remaining devices are available to order for schools that have not yet done so.

ENDS

[Appointment of Jo Farrar as Second Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice](#)

News story

The Ministry of Justice Permanent Secretary has today (16 March 2021) announced that Jo Farrar has been appointed as the new Second Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice.



The Ministry of Justice Permanent Secretary, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced that Jo Farrar, currently Chief Executive, HM Prison and Probation Service, has been appointed as the new Second Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice.

This newly created role brings together HM Prison and Probation Service, the Office of the Public Guardian, Legal Aid Agency and Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, and will support the Permanent Secretary in leading across the 75,000 strong Ministry of Justice group.

Welcoming Jo's appointment, Simon Case, Cabinet Secretary said:

I am delighted to welcome Jo Farrar as the new Second Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice. She has a wealth of relevant experience in the department and I look forward to working with her in her new role.

Ministry of Justice Permanent Secretary, Antonia Romeo, said:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Jo Farrar into this pivotal position. As a major delivery Department, MOJ has a challenging agenda to protect the public, reduce reoffending and provide swift access to justice. Jo brings a wealth of experience to the newly created Second Permanent Secretary role, which will lead four of our vital delivery agencies, as well playing a major role leading the whole of the MOJ group.

Jo Farrar said:

This is a fantastic opportunity to help shape the future of the Ministry of Justice and a real privilege. People in the MOJ work incredibly hard to deliver essential public services and I am proud of everything we have achieved over the last two years. I look forward to taking on this new challenge and working with Ministers and the Permanent Secretary to deliver a world-class justice system.

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