

**Hannah Bradley, Senior Manager – Strategic Communications:** Welcome to today's webinar everyone. There are lots of you on the line at the moment. This webinar is called "When things go right: A wider perspective of the exams system". There are three presenters in for you today and they are Richard Garrett, Emma Scott, and Cath Jadhav from Ofqual, and they will present this webinar for you. My name is Hannah Bradley. I am the Senior Manager for Strategic Communications and I am just here to offer a few housekeeping points before we get underway.

*[Webinar instructions]*

Today's webinar, this is a rough structure of what today's webinar will look like. It is part of a series of engagements with exams officers and I hope a lot of you have seen other things that we've been doing. We want to try and help support you in your roles, and a lot of today's webinar has been informed by what you have told us on most things, one of those things being a survey that I will talk about in a moment, and the topics are just on the screen for you there:

- The wider exam system, who does what and what we know about your role
- How those six weeks of the summer look like to us, what we do during that time
- Reducing opportunities for things to go wrong
- What to do if/when things do go wrong. That's chiefly one of the main things that I know a lot of you want to get out of today based on our pre-webinar question last week that a lot of you kindly took part in for us.

We are going to have a short break to reflect and capture questions and issues, but do ask them as they occur and do come up with suggestions or anything that you'd like us to reflect on. Do just type those into that questions box and we will be able to get to them as and when.

First things first, what you told us and what we'd like to know. Just to give you a bit of feedback on that survey that we put out for you last month. We had 784 responses to that survey and at least 97% of those were from exams staff, so we're very appreciative of you taking the time to tell us the kinds of things that you will find useful in the communications and things that we might be able to do to help you in your roles, and some of the things you told us, one of them was that a video on the rules that you could show to students would be valued by yourselves, 57% of you said that was actually the number one thing that you'd find useful, but incidentally a lot of you said, a not insignificant proportion, said that actually of all the suggestions of things that we gave you, things like PowerPoint slides, posters, checklists, that kind of thing, that actually all of those things would be useful, so we're looking at trying to produce more than one of those things to help you in your roles.

Virtually all of you said that you take steps to keep mobile phones out of the exam room, and some of you – anecdotally this is, I mean it wasn't by all means all of you, but we did see a theme that some of you feel that other teachers seemingly don't always understand what's involved in your role. So we've got time in this webinar to capture your thoughts and reflections on these things, as I say, and one of those things that we're going to be... one of the ways that we're going to do that is by launching polls. Now, it will tell us a little bit about you, but also it will tell you a little bit more about you. We had about 500 people signing up and, as I say, there are increasing numbers of people already logging in as I speak, so it would be useful for you to know a little bit more about the audience and who you're viewing this webinar alongside, and your counterparts in other centres. On that note, I'm just going to launch a poll just to find out actually what centres that you're all coming from.

*[Poll in progress]*

It's good to see all of you engaging. We've got 89% of people have voted, so 90%, so I think I will just close that now and I will share those results. So most of you are from maintained schools, so that's a good picture actually, you can see on your screens now the kind of make-up of the audience in that respect, and we will launch those polls as we go along during the webinars, just to give you an idea of who you're looking at these things alongside.

We will do another one now. I think we're going to be asking how long you've all worked as exams staff, because that will give us a good idea of how much experience that we've all got as an audience.

*[Poll in progress]*

89% voted, so before I show those results and close that poll, I'm just going to pass you over to Richard Garrett, who will be taking the webinar proper for you – afternoon, Richard.

**Richard Garrett, Director of Policy & Strategic Relationships of General Qualifications, Ofqual:** Thanks, Hannah, good afternoon everyone, so I think first of all I will just let Hannah publish the results, so we can see what those look like. You'll see we've got quite a spread of experience today. Most people have been in the role for a very long time, so yes, so that's very interesting and hopefully that just gives you a bit of a picture of the people that we've got on today and it just gives us an idea, so that we can think about that in terms of how we structure some of what we're planning to do later. But if I move onto the content proper that we wanted to cover, I think first of all, if I talk a bit about what we'd like to know and what we'd like to get out of this, what we'd like to get from you, we're most interested, I think, in what's important to you.

*[Webinar instructions]*

We think we've got a pretty good idea from our engagements with you, from our engagements with your representative organisations, from some of our visits to schools and colleges; we think we've got a pretty good sense of the key issues, the areas of concern, but we might not have got it quite right, so we've already shared a bit and we will share some more about what we think the things are, but feel free to correct us and feel free to tell us what you want to know. Specifically we will be asking some particular questions of you today, so we're particularly interested in the approaches that some of you might take to securing mobile phones; if any of you have identified any particularly innovative solutions that have made a difference, it's a perennial problem since students started having them in large numbers. We know from the annual figures on malpractice and maladministration that we publish that up until last year we're seeing increasing numbers year-on-year, and it's something that we're particularly interested to think what can be done. We're going to talk a bit about the research we've done in this area, but we're really interested to hear about what you might want or any solutions that you've got.

We're going to focus a bit again when we get into the detail about facilitating access arrangements, about the use of separate rooms. We know that there are all sorts of logistical challenges and issues, but we also know that this can be the root cause of the some of the more significant issues we see. This can be the root cause of students taking the wrong paper, of exam security being breached, and so again I think we're particularly interested to understand your experiences in this area and understand what might be particular areas of focus for us.

And lastly, just to highlight some of the key things that we'll be seeking your input on. we know that it's required, it's standard practice, to have two people opening papers, but some of you tell us that can be particularly challenging in particular circumstances and we're interested to find out what those circumstances are, what might be able to be done about that; any particular thoughts on how that arrangement can work best.

What we want to know, I think, is... so we've got some very specific questions, but we're also particularly interested in anything you want to tell us. And as I said, I think we're particularly interested to understand if there's anything you think we're missing in the key issues or if you think there's anything else that we or the exam boards should be doing to address any particular issues.

Coming onto your role and our understanding of that. What we have produced today is based on an understanding that we've got about your role and this is kind of guided and reflected the things that we're talking about. Now, what you'll see on the slide is some of the key characteristics. What I haven't tried to do here is list all of the things that you do – we need far many more slides for that – but also I don't think that's really what we wanted to do. We wanted to reflect really some of those key characteristics and some of the elements that we think are important for talking about today, so I think in particular we recognise the importance of the role that you play. You make a vital contribution to the working of the exam system, to things happening as they should, and also when things go wrong, they can have very serious consequences for the individuals involved, for the schools, and sometimes for the wider system, and I think that it's that dynamic I think that we're particularly keen to explore. We also know from the survey we launched and some of the things that you told us that there are some particular challenges that many of you experienced, and Hannah has alluded to some of these. We know that some of you experience particular challenges with some of your engagements with staff and senior leaders, and some of you tell us that those work really well, but some of you tell us that those can be challenging. We know that you've got logistical challenges around the buildings that you work in and finding space for the exams. We know that, particularly for the newer amongst you, getting your heads around the volume of things you need to know and, in particular, the rules and requirements can be particularly challenging.

On that note, what we'd like to do is launch another poll, really just to understand in terms of the people that we've got on today your level of understanding and confidence in the way you understand the system.

*[Poll in progress]*

We will close that poll and some excitement later, perhaps, to help you stay all the way to the end, we're going to be putting the figures from that out at the end in relation to the questions and we'll be asking you a similar question again to see how things might have changed, so if you hold on for the results of that one. But before we get into the detail of what we wanted to talk about today, we wanted to just set the scene briefly in terms of the wider exam system and in terms of our and the exam boards' roles, just so everybody is very clear on those elements. In terms of the system itself, some of you might have seen this diagram that we produced. It's a handy summary of the key elements. I'd just highlight that the scale of the system – I mean, these figures are for last summer, we will be producing something similar for this year in December, but nearly 1.5 million students in going on for 6,000 schools and colleges, taking over 2,000 exams, 14 million plus different exam papers being taken, marked by 63,000 examiners, and leading to 6.6 million results with every year around about 5% of those in recent times being challenged in the post results service. It just gives you an idea of the scale of the system and the fact that the contributions that each of you make are contributing to a system operating on that kind of scale.

In terms of us and our role, Ofqual is an independent non-ministerial government department. That means that we are independent of government, we report directly to Parliament on matters, our functions, what we set up to do and the powers that we've got to do it are set out in legislation, and we set rules to ensure that the qualifications we regulate deliver valid and reliable outcomes. We've been particularly busy doing that over the past few years, as GCSEs and A levels have been reformed. We've been rewriting our rules, we've been changing them in various areas. You'd be familiar with many of those changes I'm sure. We regulate the exam boards to make sure that

they're developing, delivering, and awarding the qualifications that meet our requirements. One particular element of that is the way in which we scrutinise and oversee the delivery of the summer series, monitoring at that time how exam boards deal with issues and ensuring that when they're addressing difficult issues, they prioritise fair outcomes for all students. We publish quite a lot of things. We publish reports and research to explain our approach and we're also responsible for the collection and publication of official statistics, so we publish data on things like entries, malpractice, reviews of marking, those sorts of things, so that there is transparency about the way the system operates.

So to put that into context in relation to the exam boards' role, so the exam boards are responsible for developing the qualifications that meet the government's expectations in terms of what students study, so meeting their curriculum expectations, and meet our rules about how that curriculum must be assessed. We expect that they deliver high-quality papers to all centres, that they provide reasonable adjustments and special consideration where that's required, that they are monitoring carefully how the centres that they recognise are administering exams. They're responsible for securing markers for marking papers reliably and fairly, for setting grade boundaries, and issuing results. And they also must investigate malpractice and where that's proven, take action. It's our job to make sure that they are doing all of that to a high standard and if they're not, to take action where that's appropriate.

So hopefully that puts into context who we are if you didn't know and how we relate to the exam boards. What we thought we'd do next is just talk a little bit about the summer and how it appears to us from our side of the fence, if you like, and I'm going to introduce my colleague, Emma Scott, to do that.

**Emma Scott, Associate Director, Standards for Delivery & Performance of General**

**Qualifications, Ofqual:** Thanks, Richard. As Richard said, we have responsibility for ensuring how the exam boards deliver their summer series, so this means that we have a macro view of the exam series as a whole, but we also oversee how each exam board is managing their particular exams.

Our oversight of this doesn't just occur through the actual exam series. We're monitoring the exam boards all year. Ahead of the actual exam period we meet with each of them on multiple occasions to understand how they're managing any risk to the exam series, and during the actual summer there are a number of ways that we monitor how it's going. Exam boards are required to notify us about any issues that occur as they arise. We also monitor social media, so that we can see any concerns, as they're emerging, and some of those we might pick up with the exam boards to check how they're dealing with them. We are also an organisation that people can come to if they have concerns about practice in their own centres or in exam boards, so whistleblowers will often come to us to report issues that they are concerned about, and we take those up with the exam boards too. And also people can complain directly to us if they feel that the exam boards aren't operating in the way that we might want them to.

We take all that information throughout the summer and then we have to ascertain when it's appropriate for us to get involved, so during the summer we monitor all that information and assess the risk as it unfolds. We have an intervention strategy, which is basically that it's for the exam boards to manage those risks and to put them right, but that we can step in if we don't think that they're doing enough, and after the summer we evaluate how well we think the exam boards managed the summer and whether or not there are areas that we need to pick up with individual exam boards or whether there are cross-cutting themes that need some sort of intervention from our side. We also then look at what we might want to do ahead of the following summer to prevent some issues that we'd seen in that summer reoccurring.

Now, I think Richard is going to take you through what some of those lessons learned are that we might have experienced from this summer and previous summers.

**RG:** Yes, I think this is probably one of the key elements of the webinar here. We wanted to talk about reducing the opportunities for things to go wrong and I think the first thing to say is that what we've done here is – these are not, though we haven't highlighted the precise details of exactly each case, but the following are based on real issues that we've seen over the last few years, and I think before we get into it, it's important to say we know that you take these issues seriously and that the number of serious issues are relatively few in number, but, as I say, these are things that we've seen and reflect trends rather than isolated examples. For many of you, you may not have seen these particular issues in your centres; you might say, well, that wouldn't happen if you were following the rules as intended, but I think it might be instructive to know that these things can happen, and it might also illustrate what lies behind some of the rules that are there. We're not saying through highlighting this that absolutely everything that's there at the moment is perfect and can't be improved. Far from it. We're interested in your thoughts on that issue, but it might just highlight why some of the things which can seem bureaucratic and can seem unnecessary are in place because of what happens when things go wrong. I think it also illustrates that while the cause of these things can be very local, the consequence can be national and really quite significant.

We will get into it and what we'll do is perhaps I'll set out the issue at hand and Emma might talk in a little bit more detail about the specific cases that we've seen. The first one – and I can probably imagine that quite a few of you are sort of with us on this in terms of wanting entries to be in in good time, wanting to be able to complete that part of the process with as few difficulties as possible, but it's just really to highlight the difficulties that late entries can give rise to. Not just of course in relation to the additional costs and the additional administration that they will necessarily cause, but also in relation to the fact that they can cause particular issues in the actual delivery of the exams. I'm sure you probably need little encouragement to do this in practice, but I think certain issues arise because entries are not made on time, because there are... or because entries are changed late in the process, particularly when changes are made to tiering decisions or to optional paper decisions, all those sorts of things, so I think, Emma, we've seen that play out in particular ways over the past couple of years.

**ES:** One particular example we saw this year, largely I think because of the new GCSE combined science and teachers' uncertainty about how students might perform on the different tiers, we did see some centres making a number of late changes to their combined science entries. Exam boards told us that this created some administrative risks for them and we're aware that a number of small packs of papers had to be sent out to centres as an additional dispatch. Because these were papers that were sent outside of the normal dispatch, on some instances there were either misfiled or they were incorrectly opened on the day of the exam and, as I'm sure you're aware, as soon as a paper has been incorrectly opened there is the risk that there could be a further security breach, so if a candidate has access to the information, obviously there is a risk that they might share that with their peers or that if they did have access to a mobile phone that they might take pictures of that paper and circulate it online. Obviously, our concern is that the opportunity for the wrong paper to be handed out is minimised as much as possible, including going back as far as when papers were actually dispatched, so keeping that as logical as possible.

**RG:** So the next issue we wanted to talk about is our access arrangements. Now, again, you'll be familiar with the expectations in this area, you'll be familiar with the expectations in relation to the relationship you'll have with your special educational needs coordinators, who have the responsibility in this area, but I think, again, we see issues where sometimes the root cause of other issues can be issues with the administration of access arrangements, and so being clear that they're only sought where they're necessary and they're directly addressing a student's issues, and

in particular that separate rooms are only used where it's necessary to do so with the additional complexity that they can create. We're particularly interested, I think, in this issue. We're going to talk through an example, but just to highlight that I think one of the things that would be particularly helpful to gather from you at this stage through the question box – you can ignore that it says “questions” on it, we're interested in questions, but we're also interested if there are any particular – the factors that you're considering when deciding if to use an additional room. I will ask Hannah in a second to open a poll on this, but before I do, again, it is probably helpful just for Emma to talk about some specific examples in this area.

**ES:** So again another example we have seen is where a small number of students are in a separate room because they had a particular access arrangement that meant they couldn't be sat in the main exam hall. Because they were in an extra room resources were obviously limited, so there was only one person present to open the question paper pack. In this instance, an incorrect paper was handed out, the error was realised and the person who handed out the paper, took them away and replaced the paper with the correct paper, so the students went on to sit the paper they should have sat. However, because the students had had access to a paper that they shouldn't have had access to, and on this occasion they had had sight of the contents, it means that they weren't then permitted to sit that paper at the scheduled time. So while there was no wider security breach, it did mean that for those students they were only assessed on a proportion of the assessments that were available to them. So they were only able to be assessed on the ones that they had actually sat, which meant that, for the paper that they had missed, they had to have assessed marks.

**RG:** And at this stage, Hannah, it would be really helpful if you could open a poll that we want to raise on this issue. So it should be coming up in a second. Here we go. We're interested to understand which arrangements you would typically provide an alternative room for and whether or not certain of those arrangements routinely require an alternative room. I think you can tick as many as applicable here.

*[Poll in progress]*

So hopefully those should be coming up for you now. Here we go. It is interesting. Interesting to see. We might return to that one when we consider the further reflections.

OK, so contingency planning, things do go wrong, things do happen and the problems arise, clearly, when the arrangements for dealing with that are not well developed and, again, I think Emma has got some examples of when that has happened in practice.

**ES:** Yes, we have one particular example where the exams officer wasn't present in the centre because they were ill. They had given instructions to their stand-in, but the instructions simply said that they were to check the papers and then file them. So the stand-in, who obviously didn't have any previous experience of how the exams were operated, opened every pack that they had received in that dispatch, looked through them to check that they were all correct and that they were all there and then filed all the papers in date order. Obviously, when the permanent member of staff returned, they identified that, effectively, security had been compromised, and they had to escalate it, so they told the exam board. In this occasion, obviously, there was no further breach, but it did mean that the centre received a warning about the protocols that they had in place, so there was a detrimental effect for the centre here.

**RG:** Yeah, and that links quite nicely, I think, to wider issues around paper security, because unfortunately, sometimes there are occasions when what might almost at centre level be fairly innocuous breaches actually have more significant wider – raise wider concerns, because of course once a paper is not fully secured, even if it is just one student that is aware of that contents

of that, particularly given the nature of social media and things today, it is very easy for that breach to be unable to be contained.

So that emphasises the importance of paper security, it emphasises the importance of doing the, I guess, the basic things about querying inconsistencies, not opening the packages before time, storing them securely and making sure that there are always two people to open packages. It really emphasises the importance of those things because as soon as something goes wrong in this area, as soon as security is compromised it can potentially lead to the whole paper for the whole cohort having to be replaced.

Again, Emma is going to talk a bit about the issues we have seen.

**ES:** So an example I thought would be helpful to share was where a centre did all the right things. So they were checking the packages that they had had to identify whether they had everything that they needed. As a result, they noticed that a number of packages had both AM and PM on the front cover for the same exam, so there was an inconsistency and it wasn't clear whether those papers were for the morning or the afternoon. Because they had checked upfront, they were able to check with the awarding organisation who was able to identify that some of those packages had been incorrectly labelled. Because that had been checked early, it gave the awarding organisation the opportunity to create another dispatch, make sure that they had the correct papers available to them, correctly labelled, and were able to retrieve the papers that had been incorrectly labelled.

**RG:** I think at this stage, the last of these sorts of issues we want to talk about were issues to do with the security and presentation of results, and this is the point at which I welcome another of my colleagues, Cath Jadhav, who is going to talk a little bit about issues associated with that.

**Cath Jadhav, Associate Director of Standards and Comparability, Ofqual:** So you will know that exam boards provide grade boundary information the day before results in order that you and teachers can use that as a reference point. Please treat those like results. I know the vast, vast majority of you do, but treat them like results, they are under embargo, and we know that leaks of that sort of material can cause considerable anxiety for students who, of course, are still waiting for their results, so please bear that in mind. We have also seen sometimes, there is a handful of centres every year where in setting up the IT systems so that students can logon and see their results, something goes wrong and they are able to access them the day before. We know that students, teenagers, are quite opportunistic, so they will often try to login and occasionally they find that they can and they can access their results, which as you can imagine causes all kinds of problems. Please make sure that if you or your IT colleagues are setting that up, that all of the controls are in place so that they don't go live until results day.

And then on presentation of results, you will, I am sure, be aware that there were some problems with the presentation of the combined science grades in the summer, so those double grades were supposed to be separated by a hyphen and that hyphen dropped off the results slips, which caused quite a lot of confusion. Exam boards are working on that and we should have a solution to that next summer. They have certainly told us that it won't be an issue when they print certificates shortly, if they haven't already.

Thank you.

**RG:** I will get Emma back at this point. I think what we wanted to do was to also just pause and just talk a little bit about mobile phones in particular. We know that they're a particular challenge for you. They're a particular challenge – you told us that in the survey. I think that was telling us something we knew already. We know it both from the malpractice statistics and we know it from the on-going engagements that we have, and that it is a particularly challenging area, because often this isn't about people necessarily – one can never be sure – looking to gain an advantage, it

is either inadvertent or sometimes to do with the degree of attachment that students have to their phones. I will ask Emma to just talk a little bit more about that.

**ES:** So we commissioned some behavioural research where we asked them to look at what the biggest kind of risks to malpractice, essentially, were, and mobile phones obviously came up as one of those areas that presents a risk. They found, which probably isn't surprising to many of you,, that students are very attached to their mobile phones, it is probably the most expensive item they own, it has everything, all their contacts on it, people don't remember phone numbers anymore, they have it in their phone, it has all their apps on it, and so when they are asked to give that phone up, it is a very personal thing for them. The research found that the students are likely to try to find ways to keep hold of their phone rather than to give it up, and they don't want to leave it at home either, so they want to be able to bring it to school and keep hold of it. While they might go to some lengths to keep their phone, so we heard reports about where students bring in two phones, one which they are happy to give in and another one, which is their real one, which they want to keep. They don't necessarily do that because they have any intention of cheating. However, if they are found with a mobile phone, obviously, the consequences for them can be quite significant.

The most successful school policies seem to be those that have looked at ways to encourage students to give up that possession because they recognise the value of that phone to students and, obviously, give reassurance about how they are going to look after it.

We know that from the survey we did with you, this is what you think as well, this reflects how you feel students act about their phones. We thought this might be a good opportunity for you to share with us any ways in which you have identified innovative ways to get students to hand over their mobile phone, or innovative ways that you found to store mobile phones that give students that reassurance. So if you're able to give us some feedback on that in the question box, that would be very helpful, we will share some information about the top tips that are coming in from you at the end of this presentation.

**RG:** I think as Emma said that is another area where if there is anything you have got to tell us, then please do just use that box at any point to put things in. So the very last thing we wanted to say before we get questions is really just to talk about – we tried to talk, our focus today, and I think rightly has been about all of the things that we might do to prevent things going wrong, all of the things that we might try and do to eliminate issues, but actually things do go wrong. The last word before we ask you for your input is just to talk about what to do when things, as they do occasionally, do go wrong.

**CJ:** Thanks, Richard. Yes, prevention is obviously better than cure, so when you're preparing, please plan ahead, make sure that you have planned ahead for your access arrangements, make sure that there are others in the centre who know what needs to happen if you're not there, and double check everything, so particularly when you're opening papers, please double check.

So I have seen a couple of comments that have come through while we have been talking, suggesting that the need to double check papers is because we don't trust exams officers. That is not why this security check is in place, it is because we're all infallible, we all make mistakes, particularly under pressure and so that second pair of eyes is to make sure that it is the right day, it is right date, it is morning or afternoon, it is foundation or higher tier if that applies, because getting it wrong can have catastrophic consequences for those students, so please double check and don't think that is because we don't trust you.

What we're particularly interested in when things do go wrong, our priorities are, as Emma has already explained, talking about the security of those papers, so making sure the security of the



assessment is not breached. Also, one of our focuses is on the validity of the assessment, so making sure that what the students have done is admissible, it can be counted towards their results, and so we're interested in fairness not just to the individual students that have been affected, but to the whole cohort of students.

It happens in a very, very small number of cases every year, but if you are in a situation where you do give out the wrong paper, don't panic, so there are a couple of key things to remember. Firstly, don't let the students out of the room, leave the students in the exam room, make sure they are supervised while you get in touch with the exam board, because the exam board will have clear protocols depending on exactly what has happened and they will be able to give you advice, but the important thing is that the students remain supervised. If that does happen and the students have seen confidential material, then you will probably be asked to get confidentiality statements from those students. It is really important that those students understand what they are signing and they understand the implications, because we do see cases every year where students share content on social media and they are disqualified as a result, so it is really important that the students understand what they are signing.

So just to give you an example of how this can go wrong and the kind of implications for students, so we had an example last year, the year before, where a student was supposed to be taking the GCSE maths non-calculator paper, but they were given the calculator paper by mistake. So not only were they given the wrong paper but they were given a paper with much harder sums in it, when actually they were expecting to take a non-calculator paper. The student didn't realise and it was only in a discussion with the teacher after the exam when everybody had been released from the exam hall that the student realised. So there were two problems for this particular student that they hadn't sat the non-calculator paper and they had sat the calculator paper without a calculator. So their grade ended up being based on just their paper three at the very end. These things... it is very easy to make mistakes but they have really serious consequences for students and potentially for the whole cohort if the security of the paper is breached. Please do check.

**RG:** Brilliant, thanks, Cath. That is it from the things that we wanted to say to you. Now, what we're going to ask you to do is you haven't already to get all your questions into us. We will consider them and then we will come back to you in about five minutes or so with a list of the questions we're going to answer and the answers for them. In the meantime, we have just popped up a list of the kind of – some of the key resources, some of the things that you may or may not have seen, we're interested to understand if, actually, you are aware of these, if you do use them, so those are up there at the moment and they're something you might want to reflect on. What we're also going to do, so we will be away for the length of this video, we're going to play a video that the JCQ has developed which is designed to address the issue around mobile phones and is a resource that is designed to be used with students, so something that you could play to students and get them to look at in order to see whether or not they – in order to consider the issues associated with phones. We will play that, please don't go anywhere. If you send us your questions and then we will come back with a selection of those. Hopefully, the video will play now and then we will be back shortly.

*[Video playing]*

**RG:** Right, hello everyone, we're back. We have been going through your questions. We have had loads and loads of really helpful feedback, so I think the first thing to say is that we are going to be going through it all very carefully. If you haven't had a chance to put in something you want to put in, keep going. We might not have a chance to get it all now given that we're approaching the end of time, but that doesn't mean we won't get to it. I think if there are helpful things for us to be aware of, then just send them in because there has been some really useful stuff that gives us some real

food for thought, so that is the first thing. The second thing is that we have had quite a number of really detailed questions, a lot of which relate to the exam boards, the detail of the exam boards' rules, a lot of the detail of the JCQ documentation. What we're going to do in relation to all of those is rather than try and rush through one or two of them now and not do justice to them, we will collate all of them and we will engage with JCQ about the best way of addressing those. I know, actually, that JCQ are thinking about questions in this area anyway, so whether it is a contribution to that or whether or not it is just as an output of this, we address all of them. One way or another, we will work with JCQ to make sure that those questions are addressed. I know that Nick Lait from JCQ has been on the webinar, so he has heard all of the general discussion, so he will be very clear on the background and then we will work with JCQ to make sure we get answers to all of those.

Don't despair and don't think that we have ignored the question that you have asked. We will make sure that we get responses to you shortly.

What we did think we would pick up were a couple of the themes that we have seen, so the first thing is we have had quite a lot of interesting things about practice in relation to mobile phones, and I think Emma is going to try and summarise some of the really interesting things that people have told us that some of you do.

**ES:** In a lot of the responses we have seen that most centres operate an empty pocket policy, so they don't allow students to bring anything into the exam room other than the utensils that they are going to use, so either they have to leave their bags in the hallway or they have to leave their equipment at home. We have seen a number of centres use a storage that is related to the desk number, so either a cupboard which has boxes that relate to each desk number or a kind of shoe bag type affair at the back of the room with each desk number on it, or a clear wallet on the table in which they have to put all their phones and watches.

Other centres have mentioned using phone detectors or metal detectors to see whether or not students have phones on them, and there has been quite a lot of discussion about whether or not there were any recommendations about a good phone detector because it appears there are quite a few on the market. We will go through all the rest of the comments that we have received and collate them together and make sure that we get back to you a comprehensive list of top tips in that area.

**RG:** There are a few other things but one of the things that many of you pointed out to us and apologies for this; we managed not to quite get the poll to be set up quite how we wanted on access arrangements. What we're going to do is just rerun that poll and this time you will be able to tick as many boxes as we you like, so that should come up on your screens in a second and if you can answer that as you would have intended the first time around, then we might get some results that are a bit more reflective of practice.

While you're doing that, I will just talk about some of the other really interesting feedback that we had come through, so I think we had some interesting suggestions to the exam boards about the way in which there could be some innovative changes to the ways exams are administered, which would make your lives easier. One suggestion would be about implementing bar codes on the front of exam papers and sort of coupling that with an app that would support you in scanning the barcode to check that it was the right paper and the paper that was expected for the day. And so that was one of the set of examples, I think, about the way in which new technology could actually better support things and better support effective administration.

Similarly, thinking about the way in which colour might be used in packaging, particularly to differentiate and delineate between different tiers, might be another thing that just might support

people in making the distinction between different papers, particularly in tiered exams where the students are all taking the paper at the same time and mistakes are possibly a bit more likely.

Coming up on your screen in a second should be the outcome of the poll that we have just re-run, and then the results might be a bit more expected in terms of that, in terms of just showing some of those arrangements for most of you almost always require alternative rooms, others less so. That is interesting to see.

I think before we finish, there is just one other thing that I think Emma wanted to mention from the feedback. We're going through it as we speak and I think we're identifying issues as we go along.

**ES:** So some people have usefully told us some specific issues that they encountered over the summer. Sometimes in relation to the examples that we might have used or in relation to the issues that we have raised. If there are any particular issues that you wanted us to be aware of, then we're more than happy to receive those from you and we will take those into account alongside all the other monitoring that we do. If you do have any concerns, please do get in touch.

**RG:** OK and that is almost it. I think the very last thing that we wanted to do was just launch a final poll and we were interested to see, really, how much difference, if you like, or perhaps how useful the webinar has been to your levels of understanding. Now, actually, I don't think we're certain what the sort of right answer is, so we will put them both up side by side in a second, but you will see that we asked you at the start about your sort of level of confidence and we're asking how it has changed. Hopefully, for many of you, and I noted at the start many of you have been doing this for more than 10 years. I think a one-hour webinar on a Tuesday afternoon might not make much difference and so I don't think we're using this to judge the overall effectiveness, but it was just interesting to understand. I think what Hannah is done there has published the outcomes previously of how you were feeling in terms of how most of you are feeling about administering exams and most of you feel like you have got a pretty good handle on it, but there is kind of 1 in 10 of you that are not so sure, and we're interested – and the poll will come up in a minute – to see if that has changed at all and how this discussion has affected any of that.

The poll will come up. I am grateful if you can fill that in before you go, and we might have a very quick reflection on the findings. But that kind of sort of highlights, if you like, a greater question, which is whether or not you found this useful, if there are particular things that you think we could do differently, so I think please send us that feedback too. I think we're particularly interested in those areas that you would like more information on, that you would like us to do more on, so don't forget to send us that.

I think, finally, it is just to say thank you from myself and from my colleagues for taking the time to listen, to get over 300 of you still present after an hour and when I am sure you have got lots of other things to be doing is really good to see.

Yes, I think that is probably quite an encouraging result, we have only got a couple of people who feel worse off after this, and hopefully that is because we have highlighted an issue they weren't aware of, and lots of people who are feeling pretty similar, which is hopefully a reflection of the fact that we do have a lot of experienced people who are well used to many of the issues that we have highlighted. But for the quarter or so of those who feel like you have learned – who have evidently had issues to reflect on them, that is very helpful.

As I say, if there are things that you think we could have done more of or done differently, please do continue to feed it back. The webinar won't end immediately, we will leave some time for you to give us any further thoughts and reflections, and just a commitment from us that those detailed questions that, perhaps, we didn't have time to do justice to all of them, we will be sending – one

way or another, we will discuss with colleagues and with JCQ the best way of doing it – we will be sending further responses to those.

Thank you very much for joining us today and we will be in touch with those further things shortly.

**Ends**