**Covid-19 – Shielding**

**Local Authority**

**04 December**

**Why is this booklet being sent to me?**

You are receiving this booklet because we have asked you to shield previously or we have recently added you to the list of those considered at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). We are sending this, to help guide you on the best way to balance the risk of your daily activities.

**What information is included in the booklet?**

The booklet contains information about how to keep yourself safe during your daily activities. We have provided guidance on a number of areas such as school, shopping, travel and keeping in contact with people to ensure that you are in the best position to make the right choices about your own safety.

We have also included details on how to access additional assistance, this may be through priority supermarket slots or finding a safe space to talk about your mental health.

# **Am I being asked to go back into shielding?**

No. We are not advising people to start shielding again. It is important to strictly follow the protection level guidance for your area and maintain regular hand washing, physical distancing and face coverings.

You may also wish to follow the additional guidance set out within the booklet, which includes a table of extra measures for those who were previously asked to shield.

# **Why am I not being advised to shield?**

Those of you who are at highest risk from coronavirus will be feeling particularly anxious. Keeping you safe is at the forefront of decision-making. This is why we have provided extra guidance to ensure that you are supported in making the best choices for you.

We know that shielding has had a huge negative impact on people’s mental and physical health. This booklet is designed to help support you in assessing your risk within your home and local community while going about your daily life.

**Can I work if I am on the Shielding list and live in a Level 4 area?**

You should follow the general advice for everyone in Level 4 areas and work from home if you can. Employers should make sure their staff can work from home if possible. If you cannot work from home, most workplaces can be made safe, even if you are at the highest risk. [You should continue to follow the extra advice set out in the table (shown below) while at work](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/10/covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework/documents/extra-protection-level-advice-people-highest-risk-coronavirus/extra-protection-level-advice-people-highest-risk-coronavirus/govscot%3Adocument/extra-protection-level-advice-people-highest-risk-coronavirus.pdf) (Link to PDF online)

**What to do if you can’t go to work**

We will be issuing a letter to all those on the shielding list shortly. This will serve a similar purpose as fit note should you be unable to attend work if you live, work or have to travel through a level 4 protection area. You should discuss how to make your workplace safe with your employer, so you can continue to work.

If your employer has done all they can and still can’t make your workplace and duties covid-safe for you, you can use this letter as evidence that you cannot go to work for as long as your area is at level 4. All you need to do is show them this letter, which serves as a fit note, and is called your Shielding Notification. You do not need a separate fit note from your GP. Only stay off work if your workplace cannot be made covid-safe for you or if you cannot travel safely to work.

**What happens if I test positive for coronavirus?**

You will be contacted by Test and Protect if you have tested positive or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. If this happens, you should follow the instructions and self-isolate. Your local authority can offer essential practical support if it’s required - for example help with delivery of food and other essentials. A new financial support payment of £500 will become available for workers on low incomes who aren’t able to work at home.

**Will I still receive my flu vaccine?**

You should get a letter inviting you and anyone you live with for a free flu vaccine. It is important that you get this vaccine. Travel to and from a vaccination centre counts as essential travel. The flu vaccine will not protect against coronavirus, but it will help protect against this year’s flu.

**How to get the flu vaccine in your area – NHS Inform tool**

NHS Inform have a tool that helps people find out quickly, where they can get their flu vaccine

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-how-to-get-the-flu-vaccine-in-your-area>

**How to request the shielding letter information in a different format**

Other formats of the shielding letter may be available on request. If you or someone you know needs this information in a different format or language, please email phs.healthdata@phs.scot. Use the subject line ‘translation request’.

Please include these details about the person who needs the different format:

* name
* address and postcode
* CHI number
* format or language required

Please also tell us if we should send information in this format in future.

If you prefer, you can call the national helpline on 0800 111 4000 with this information. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

**How can I stay up to date with what’s happening?**

Text message service

Sign up for the shielding text message service. If you have not already signed up, you can do so by texting your 10 digit CHI number to 07860 064525. You can find your CHI number on the shielding letters you have received.

Data by neighbourhood

Public Health Scotland publish information on their [COVID-19 dashboard](https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#!/vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview) including:

* data by neighbourhood areas
* testing numbers
* deaths data
* hospital and intensive care admissions

To access local data on the Public Health Scotland dashboard, select the ‘Cases by neighbourhood’ from the home page of the dashboard**.**

To pick a neighbourhood from this page:

* Select the local authority of interest from the drop down.
* The neighbourhoods within that local authority will be visible.
* Click on the neighbourhood and it will be highlighted on the map.
* Hover over the map to see data for that neighbourhood from the past 7 days.
* You can adjust the 7 day date range if you are interested in viewing an earlier period.
* The neighbourhood areas presented are ‘intermediate zones’ which is a statistical geography containing between 2,500 and 6,000 residents.

