



Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (COVID-19)

April 2021







Who this guidance is for



This guidance is for all adults and children in England who are **most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus.**

This includes:

- people who were added to the Shielded Patient List by their GP or hospital doctor
- people who were added because their name came up as someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus through the **COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment**

   	<p>If you are in this group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your doctor will have sent you a letter• you might have been told to 'shield' before <p>Other people who live with you do not need to follow this guidance. They should follow the rules and advice that apply to everyone else in England.</p> <p>If you are reading this online, you can read the rules and advice online by clicking here.</p>
<h2>What has changed</h2>	
 	<p>Since January 2021 the number of people who have coronavirus in England has fallen.</p> <p>This means everyone is at less risk of catching coronavirus including people who have been shielding.</p>



The government have outlined a plan called a roadmap for how to start slowly opening things up again.

More and more people are having the vaccine (jab).

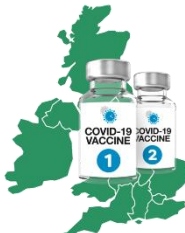
This makes it safe enough for some of the advice to change for people who have been shielding.

Although the shielding advice has changed you must still follow the rules that are in place for everyone.

If you are reading this online you can read the rules by clicking [here](#).

You are still advised to keep being extra careful and to follow these practical steps to stay safe.

Vaccination (jab)



Everyone on the Shielded Patient List should already have been asked if they want the vaccine (jab).

If you have not had your first jab, please contact your GP.

If you have had your first jab, make sure you have the second one when you are asked.

Having both jabs will mean you are even more protected.

Having the vaccine might be right for some children aged 12 to 15 years who have a condition that affects how their brain works.

Parents should talk about this with the child's GP or hospital doctor.

  	<p>For other children aged 15 and under aren't being asked if they want the vaccine yet because more research is needed.</p> <p>No vaccine works 100% so even if you have had 2 jabs there may still be a small chance of you catching coronavirus and getting ill.</p> <p>This is why you should take the extra steps in this guidance to keep yourself safe.</p>
<h2>Mixing with other people indoors and outdoors</h2>	
   	<p>Until the rules about staying apart from other people are relaxed you should still keep a safe distance from others both indoors and outdoors.</p> <p>You don't need to keep a safe distance from people who live in your house or people in your support bubble.</p> <p>Wash your hands often and try not to touch your face.</p>



Try not to meet with many people. If you do meet with people you do not live with stick to the rules.



Remember the fewer people you meet the safer you will be from catching coronavirus and getting ill.



If you do choose to meet people it is safer to meet them outdoors.



It is a good idea to go outside for exercise and you can do this with people you do not live with.



There are tips about exercise and healthy eating on the NHS better health website.



If you are reading this online you can go to the website by clicking [here](#).



When you are allowed to meet indoors with people you do not live with or people not in your support bubble, make sure you open windows to let lots of fresh air in.



If you are reading this online you can read about how to make sure indoor spaces have fresh air by clicking [here](#).



Try not to spend time in areas where you can't keep a safe distance from others or where other people are doing things that mean they won't stay a safe distance from you.









You can make new support bubbles or keep your old one if you have one.



If it is essential you can keep your childcare bubble or make a new one.



Make sure you follow the rules if you change your bubble. It is your choice to decide after thinking about the risk.

  	<p>If you are reading this online you can find information about support bubbles by clicking here.</p> <p>You can find information about childcare bubbles if you click here.</p> <p>You can find information about how to stop the spread of coronavirus by clicking here.</p>
<h2>Work</h2>	
  	<p>If you have a job, you should work from home if you can.</p> <p>If you can't work from home your boss must make changes to your workplace to cut down the risk of catching coronavirus.</p> <p>Your boss should explain to you what they have done to make your workplace safe.</p>



Some bosses are asking people to take regular tests to see if they have coronavirus.



You should think about how you will travel to work including if you can avoid travelling on public transport at the busiest times.



There is guidance for how employers can make workplaces safe from coronavirus. If you are reading this online you can find it by clicking [here](#).



The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has written guidance about protecting people who might get very poorly from coronavirus. You can read it by clicking [here](#).



They have also written guidance about how to talk about making sure your workplace is safe from coronavirus. You can read it by clicking [here](#).



If you need help to work from home or at your workplace you might be able to get help from [Access to Work](#).



The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme 'furlough' will now run until 30 September.

If you are reading this online, you can find more information by clicking [here](#).

You may still be able to go on furlough if your boss agrees, even when you are not being advised to shield. This means you can stop working, stay at home and still keep your job.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is also running until 30 September for people who work for themselves.

If you are reading this online you can find out more about SEISS by clicking [here](#).

From 1 April you will not be able to claim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) because you have been advised to shield.



You might be able to claim SSP or ESA if you are sick or can't work because of coronavirus or other health reasons.



If you are worried about your health and safety at work talk to your workplace union, HSE or local council.

They can take action if bosses are not making workplaces safe from coronavirus.









This could be giving advice, stopping them from doing unsafe things or taking them to court.



Employment rights give you protection against discrimination or being sacked or treated badly at work.



There is guidance for bosses and workers about being off work because of coronavirus. If you are reading this online you can read it by clicking [here](#).

 	<p>The Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) also has information about your rights at work and how to solve problems in the workplace. If you are worried about work you can also get advice from the Acas website or by calling the Acas helpline on 0300 123 1100.</p>
<h2>School and college</h2>	
   	<p>It is important for children to go to school to learn but also for their well being and mental health.</p> <p>Children who might get very poorly from coronavirus should go back to school from 1 April. This applies to all school settings.</p> <p>Children who live in a house with someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus do not need to shield and should have gone back to school on 8 March.</p> <p>Parents who are worried about their child going to school should speak to the child's school to find out what has been done to help make the school safe from coronavirus.</p>



Quick coronavirus tests (lateral flow tests) help to find people who have coronavirus but have **no symptoms**. This helps to stop the virus spreading.



To keep staff safe and to keep children, students and teachers in school the government have made quick coronavirus tests available to schools and colleges.



Quick tests are also available for anyone who wants to take one, including people who live with, look after or who are in support bubbles with school age children.



If you are reading this online you can find out more about coronavirus tests by clicking [here](#).



This testing will help keep safe people in the community who might get very poorly from coronavirus and their families.



All schools and colleges are following advice and guidance from Public Health England to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

Travel



If you need to use public transport you **must** wear a face covering unless you are allowed not to because of your age or disability.



If you do travel, walk or cycle if you can and think about travelling at quieter times.



For long journeys try not to get close to other people.



Try not to share cars with people you do not live with or who not in your support bubble.



You **must** wear a face covering in taxis.

Shopping



You are **not** being advised to stay out of shops but you might want to keep doing your shopping online or asking family and friends for help.



If you do go to the shops yourself avoid going at busier times.



You **must** wear a face covering unless you don't have to because of your age or disability.



If you registered for priority access to supermarket delivery slots through your council or the shielding website this will keep on going until 1 June.



After that date you can still book deliveries from the supermarket.



You might still want to ask a friend, family member or NHS volunteer responder to get your shopping or medicines for you.



If you are reading this online, find out how NHS volunteer responders can help by clicking [here](#).

Getting the help and support you need



Health and care services are still there and are following guidance to help stop the spread of coronavirus.



It is important you keep using the NHS for your health issues.



There are also lots of health services you can get from home, such as:



- ordering the medicine you take regularly



- talking to your doctor on the phone or online



If you are reading this online, you can find out about NHS help at home by clicking [here](#).



If you are reading this on your phone, you can download the NHS app by clicking [here](#).



If you don't feel well, phone **111**.



In an emergency, phone **999**.



It is important to look after your mind, as well as your body. The Every Mind Matters website has lots of information and advice. You can find out more by clicking [here](#).



The Lets Talk Loneliness website has lots of tips and advice. If you are reading this online find out more by clicking [here](#).



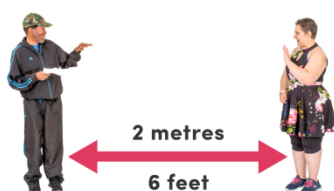
If you or someone you care for is struggling with their mental health, it is very important you get help straight away.



There are helplines available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. To find out where to get help, click [here](#).



People who come to help with your own or your child's support needs, can still visit you.



If they are not giving personal care, they should stay a safe distance away.

You can also get extra help from your energy supplier. This is the company that supplies your gas or electricity.

There are rules that mean energy suppliers must keep a list of their customers who might be vulnerable.

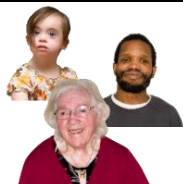
If you have a health problem that means you might get very poorly from coronavirus you can be added to the list.

A part of government called Ofgem are in charge of making sure the energy suppliers stick to the rules.

Look on their website to find out how to register and about other services your supplier can provide by clicking [here](#).

If you are struggling because of coronavirus please visit www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support or contact your local council to find out what help is available.

People most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus

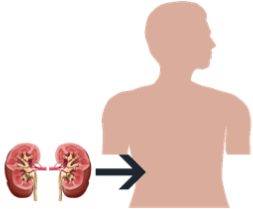
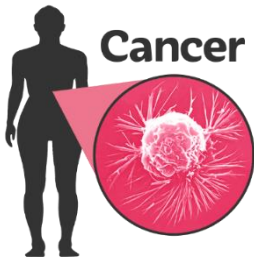






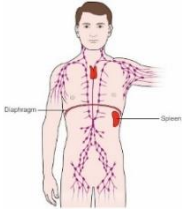


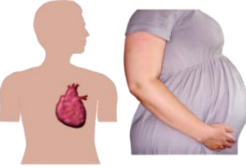

Some people are thought to be most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus. There are 3 ways of knowing if this applies to you:


- you have one or more of the health problems on the list below, or
- your hospital doctor or GP has added you to the Shielded Patient List because they think you will get very poorly if you catch the virus
- your name has come up as someone who might get very poorly from coronavirus through the **COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment**

If you do not have any of the health problems on the list or you have not had a letter telling you that you are on the Shielded Patient List, follow the **guidance** for the rest of the population.

If you think that you should be added to the Shielded Patient List, talk about your worries with your GP or hospital doctor.

    	<p>People who have the following problems are most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. People who have had transplants – like kidney or liver transplants.2. People who are having treatments including chemotherapy and radiotherapy for some cancers.3. People who are having any treatment for cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma.4. People who have long-term lung disease.5. People who were born with rare diseases such as Severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean they are more likely to get infections.
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	6. People who are taking drugs that reduce the body's responses for fighting infections.
	7. People who have problems with their spleen such as having their spleen removed which means their body can't fight germs in their blood.
	8. Adults with Down's syndrome.
	9. Adults on dialysis or with with long term kidney disease (stage 5).
	10. Women who are pregnant and who have very bad heart disease.
	11. Other people who have been put on the list based on how experts think coronavirus might affect them.

	<p>GPs and hospital doctors have been given guidance about why these decisions were made.</p>
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The pictures in this summary are from Photosymbols: www.photosymbols.com/ and www.nsu.govt.nz/pregnancy-newborn-screening/newborn-metabolic-screening-programme-heel-prick-test