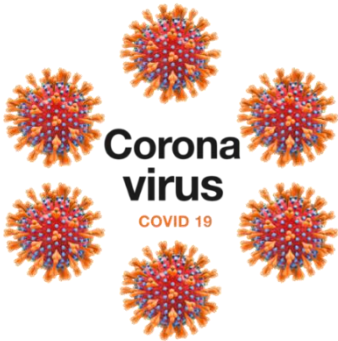





Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (COVID-19) (shielding)

February 2021

 <p>Corona virus COVID 19</p>	<p>COVID-19 is a new illness. Lots of people call it coronavirus.</p> <p>It can affect your lungs and your breathing.</p>
	<p>The most important symptoms of coronavirus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a high temperature• a new cough where you keep on coughing. This means coughing a lot for more than an hour or coughing more than 3 times in a day• losing, or a change to, your sense of smell or taste

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**.

If you are in this group:

- your doctor will have written you a letter
- you might have been told to 'shield' before



Other people who live with you do not need to shield. They can still go to school or work and should follow the current rules and advice.



If you are reading this online, you can read the current rules and advice if you click [here](#).

Vaccination (Jabs)



People most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus will get invited to get the vaccine (jab) against coronavirus before most other people.

You will be invited in line with the list made by a group of people called the JCVI.

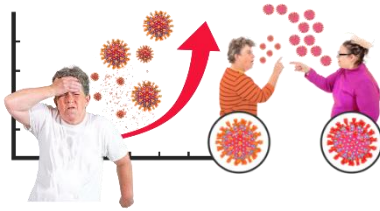
The NHS will contact you with more information about how and when you get the invite.

They will make sure you can get the vaccine in a safe way as well as getting the care and support you need.

Even if you have had the vaccine you should carry on following the rules about staying healthy and this shielding guidance.

The people you live with should carry on following the rules and guidance about staying healthy even if you and they have had the vaccine.

What has changed?



More people are catching coronavirus across the country because of a new version of the virus.

Everyone in England including people most likely to get very poorly must follow the national lockdown guidance.

The rules are:

- stay at home except for certain reasons
- do not meet people you do not live with except for certain reasons
- most shops and businesses, like pubs and restaurants, must close
- most children and young people should do their school work at home until February half term, except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers who can still go to school

Extra guidance



The new information below includes extra guidance for people most likely to get very poorly to help keep you safe and well.



We have also written to you with a version of this guidance.



This shielding guidance will apply across the whole of England during the national lockdown.

Mixing with other people



The lockdown guidance says **everyone** in England must stay at home and not mix with others except for certain reasons.



We are advising people who might get very poorly from coronavirus to stay at home and away from other people as much as possible.





You can still go to health appointments and outside for exercise, but if you do:

- try to contact as few people as possible
- stay away from busy areas

You can still meet people from your support bubble and you can meet one person you do not live with outside for exercise.

Even at home, try to keep a safe distance from people you live with, especially if they have symptoms of coronavirus or have been told to self isolate.

Work



If you have a job, you should work from home.



If your normal job means you can't work from home, talk to your boss about changing your work so you can.



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



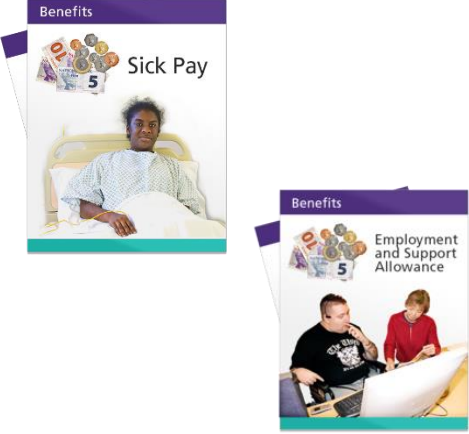



If you can't make the changes you might be able to go on 'furlough'. This means you can stop working, stay at home and still keep your job.

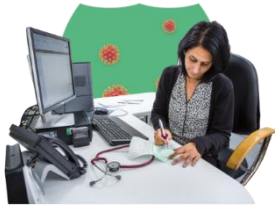


The government will give your boss the money to pay most of your wages. Talk to your boss about it.



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

  	<p>If you can't work from home, you might be able to get some benefits, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)• Employment Support Allowance (ESA) <p>If you make a claim, you can use the letter advising you to shield as proof you have been told to stay home.</p> <p>Other people who live with you can still go to work if they are not able to work from home. They can find more information about this in the national lockdown rules.</p>
<h2>School and college</h2>	
	<p>Most children will not get very poorly from coronavirus even if they have some health problems.</p>



Doctors have been checking to see if children who were told to shield before are still at high risk.



If you have already talked to your doctor about this and have been told your child is still high risk, follow this shielding guidance.



Under the national lockdown most children will learn from home until February half term, except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.



Children who might get very poorly should not go to school or college because the risk of catching the virus is very high.



Your school or college will make sure you can do school work at home.

Travel



Stay at home as much as possible, and do not travel unless you need to, for example to go to the doctors or hospital appointments.

Shopping

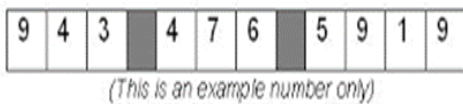


Try not to go to the shops if you don't have to.

Do your shopping online or ask friends, family or a volunteer to do your shopping for you.



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



You can register to be top of the list for online shopping. You will need your NHS number. You will find this on any letter from the NHS or a prescription.



If you already have online shopping arranged, carry on using this.



If you need any other support contact your local council and ask for help.

Find out how they can help by clicking [here](#).

Medicine



Try not to go to the pharmacy if you don't have to.

Ask a friend, family member or NHS volunteer responder to get your medicines for you.

If there is no-one to help you, your pharmacy can deliver your medicines for free.

Contact them to arrange this and tell them you have been told to shield.

Getting the help and support you need



People in your support bubble can still help you at home.



Health and care services are still there to help you in person if you want it.

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**.



If you need to see your doctor or nurse face-to-face you can. The NHS will make sure that this will be done safely.



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](#).



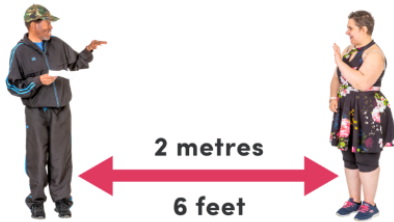
If you or someone you care for is struggling with their mental health, it is very important you get help straight away.



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.



As well as helping with shopping and medicine, NHS Volunteer Responders can phone up for friendly chats and help you to get to appointments.



Phone **0808 196 3646** between **8am and 8pm** to arrange support.


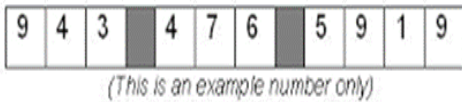





If you are reading this online you can go to their website by clicking [here](#).




Register for support

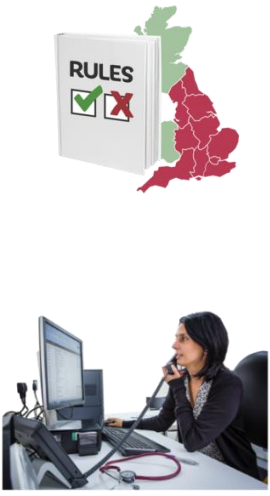


You should register for support even if you don't need any help now.

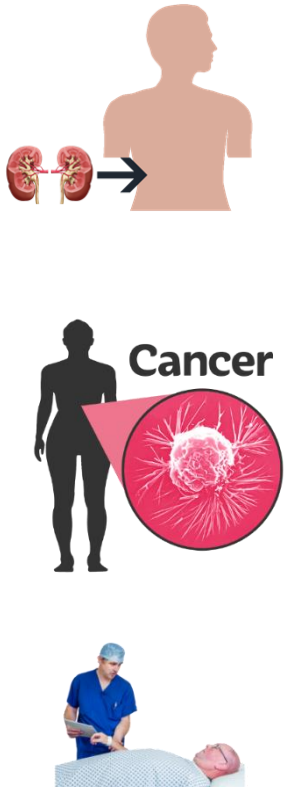
    	<p>If you are reading this online, you can register for extra help by clicking here.</p> <p>You will need your NHS number to register.</p> <p>This will be at the top of the letter you have received or on any prescriptions.</p> <p>If you need to phone to register for help, call your local council.</p> <p>To find out what help your council can give you, click here.</p>
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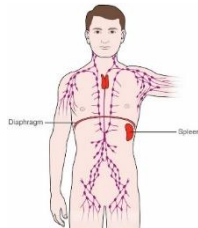
People most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus

  	<p>Some people are most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus. There are 2 ways of knowing if this applies to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
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	<p>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 national lockdown guidance.</p> <p>If you think that you should be added to the Shielded Patient List, talk about your worries with your GP or hospital doctor.</p>
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People most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus

	<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.
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4. People who have long-term lung disease.
5. People who were born with rare diseases such as SCID that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean they are more likely to get infections.
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 very bad kidney disease.

	<p>10. Women who are pregnant and who have significant heart disease.</p> <p>11. Other people who have been put on the list based on how experts think coronavirus might affect them. 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: <https://www.photosymbols.com/> and <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/pregnancy-newborn-screening/newborn-metabolic-screening-programme-heel-prick-test>
<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatments-and-drugs/surgery-to-remove-the-spleen>