Directorate for Chief Medical Officer

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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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SHIELDING YOURSELF AT HOME TO STAY SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Dear Patient;

We're writing to let you know that we're easing our shielding advice.

We're easing our advice because infection rates in Scotland are now very low, and your chances of catching coronavirus (COVID-19) are also much lower.

The easing of our shielding advice will happen throughout July, as long as infection rates in Scotland continue to fall.

If you live in a residential care or nursing home

This advice does not apply if you live in a residential care or nursing home. Instead, your care home should be following the Care Home Visiting Pathway. You can find out more about this at gov.scot.

Changes to current shielding advice

From 10 July, we're advising that you can:

- stop physically distancing from the people you live with
- go indoorsto use a toilet in someone else's house, when visiting them outdoors
- meet up to 8 peopleoutdoors, from 2 other households, in a single day – it does not need to be the same 2 households every day
- travel further than 5 miles from your house, as far as you want
- book self-catering accommodation (without shared facilities) or travel to a second home - try only to stay with people you live with at home

If you live alone, or you only live with children who are under 18, you can agree to form an extended household with one other household. This means you, and anyone else in the 2 households,can visit each other indoors and stay over without physical distancing.

If you're a shielding adult, we're also advising that any children under 12 that you live with do not need to physically distance outdoors from other children under 12.

Keeping up-to-date with further changes to shielding

As long as infection rates remain low, we expect to confirm further changes to shielding later in July.

You can keep up-to-date with any changes we make by checking online. You'll find the latest shielding advice on mygov.scot/shielding and on NHS Inform.We'll also use our SMS Shielding Service to send you the latest updates direct to your mobile phone.

If you need to ask someone a question about shielding support or anything else, you can call the free national helpline number on 0800 111 4000. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm, and will put you in touch with someone from your local council.

Our plans for shielding after 31 July

When we first advised you to shield, the coronavirus infection rate in Scotland was much higher than it is now. Shielding at home was the best way for you to stay safe.

We hope, as long as the infection rate in Scotland carries on falling, that we'll be able to advise you to stop shielding from 1 August. If we advise you to stop shielding it will be because the risk to you is very low and because we do not want you to carry on shielding if you do not need to.

How we will support you after 31 July

We know that you may be worried about stopping shielding. This is why we're looking to support you by keeping parts of the shielding programme open. Even if we advise you to stop shielding from 1 August, you'll:

- be kept on a list of shielding people, so we can contact you and update you - we will let you know if the risk to you from COVID-19 changes
- be able to access health guidance about your specific condition – this guidance will be kept up-to-date after 31 July and will include advice about how to keep yourself safe
- get updates from our SMS Shielding Service – even if our advice is to stop shielding
- get guidance on speaking to your employer about how you can return to work safely
- be able to access help and support online at mygov.scot/shielding

We'll announce whether rates are low enough for you to stop shielding before the end of July. This will be through our daily coronavirus briefing and at mygov.scot/shielding. We'll also let you know by letter and through our SMS Shielding Service.

Support with food and household items

Weekly deliveries of grocery boxes and priority access to online supermarket delivery slots will carry on until at least the end of July.

If our advice is for you to stop shielding from 1 August, we'll pause some of our shielding programme. This means weekly deliveries of grocery boxes will stop at the end of July.

If you still need support with food and household items after the end of July, we'll make sure you carry on getting access to help. If we announce a pause to shielding, we'll let you know how to access this help.

Working while shielding

If you cannot work from home, our advice remains for you not to go into work until at least 1 August.

If you're worried about money, check mygov.scot/shielding or gov.scot for details about things like furlough, statutory sick pay and benefits.

We've already advised employers that they need to make workplaces COVID-secure. We're looking at whether this means that you'll be able to return to work safely from 1 August.

If it is safe for you to go back to work, we'll give you further advice about what you'll need to check with your employer before you return to work. We'll give you this advice before 1 August.

Going back to school

As long as infection rates in Scotland stay low, children who have been asked to shield should be able to return to school at the same time as other children. We will confirm if this is the case before the end of July.

If you're worried about a child who's shielding going back to school, you can check the latest advice about returning to school at mygov.scot/shielding.

The SMS Shielding Service

The SMS Shielding Service has been set up to give you the latest updates about shielding.

If you have not already, you can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to 0786 006 4525. The text you send should only include your CHI number.

Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter. Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service and give you instructions on how to register for support with food access.

Yours sincerely,

DR GREGOR SMITH
INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Shielding: medical and health advice

Why we're making changes to shielding

Falling infection rates in Scotland mean the risks of you catching the virus are very low. This is true as long as you:

- follow the advice in this letter
- regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds
- follow physical distancing guidance - 2 metres away from anyone you do not live with
- try to avoid touching your face, as much as you can
- avoid contact with anyone who has the symptoms of coronavirus

Face coverings

Our advice is to maintain strict physical distancingat all times. This is the best way to stay safe. If you do this, you do not need to wear a face covering.

By face coverings, we mean a facial covering of your mouth and nose. This can be made of cloth or other textiles. For example, a scarf through which you can breathe. You do not need to wear a surgical or other medical grade mask.

You may want to wear a face covering if you think there's a chance you may not be able to maintain physical distancing. This advice will apply even though shielding is being eased.

Other people you live with

Other people in your household do not need to shield themselves. They only need to follow the advice given to the rest of the public in Scotland.

If you've chosen to shield as a household, our advice is that the people you live with can return to work or school.

Access to healthcare

Your needs, care and treatment remain a priority for the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland. It is vital that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. This may be routine or urgent GP or hospital care. A clinician will assess your needs as part of any GP or hospital care. This is so that they can continue to provide the care you need in a safe and timely manner. They will do a risk assessment and decide where, when and how you are seen. Your clinician may decide it is best to carry out a consultation or appointment over the telephone or via Near Me (a video calling service used by the NHS). Other times, a face to face consultation or appointment may happen at your home. Equally, after assessment of infection risk and clinical need, you may need to go to a practice, health centre or hospital.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, phone the NHS on 111. Symptoms include:

- a new, continuous cough
- a high temperature (above 37.8 °C)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Because you're in a high risk group, you should call 111 if you get any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you, or the person you care for, have cancer

If you, or the person you care for, feel unwell and have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer) within the last 6 weeks, you should phone the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711. Or you can call the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to coronavirus.

Prescriptions

Your local pharmacy may already send you the prescription medicines that you need. Your prescriptions should cover the same length of time as usual.

You can ask someone else to pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy for you. They can then bring this to your home.

Your local authority can also arrange a delivery for you if you do not have anyone who can do this. You can contact your local authority directly or via the free national helpline on 0800 111 4000.

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will arrange to have these delivered to you.

Data Protection Statement

We have used GP practice, local health board or securely stored national data to identify people. This is so we could write to them. This information has been shared appropriately within the NHS in Scotland. It did not include medical records.

We will notify GPs and health boards about those who have been contacted. This is so that they can also provide support.

We will only share contact details with local authorities and our partner retailers. This will allow them to provide support and deliver groceries and medication.

During this outbreak, we will keep your contact details in case we need to contact you again. This action is only being taken due to the current coronavirus outbreak. No details of medical conditions or health records are being shared.

Support you can get while shielding at home

Even if shielding is paused, we'll still send key updates through the SMS Shielding Service. The service will carry on for as long as it's needed. If we think it's no longer needed, we'll give you plenty of notice that it's ending.

The support you are receiving will remain in place until shielding is paused. We will confirm when and how our support services will change before the end of July.

Priority access to supermarket online delivery slots

Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose all offer priority access to their online delivery slots. Priority access should make it easier for you to get a delivery slot with a supermarket.Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee you'll always get your preferred slot.

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to sign up. You can do this by texting **1SHOP** to 0786 006 4525. This will confirm that we can share your details with supermarkets.

If you're already an online customer with one of the supermarkets, they'll contact you by email. They'll send this email to the email account you have registered with them.

If you're not signed up as a customer, we'll send you a text to let you know how to sign up with a supermarket that can deliver in your area.

If you're a parent, guardian or carer of someone who is shielding, you can request priority access to delivery slots on their behalf. It is the details of the person who is shielding that will be shared with the supermarkets. You will also need to register their details with a supermarket to access the priority service.

Many supermarkets now offer a gift card scheme to allow a friend or family member to pick up shopping for you. Some stores also offer their own food box schemes.

Weekly grocery boxes

If you buy online, or have someone who's able to get the groceries you need, you should carry on getting things in this way. If you're not able to get groceries by other means, we can send you weekly grocery boxes.The grocery boxes will stop when shielding is paused.

You can request a weekly grocery box by texting **1BOX** to 0786 006 4525. If you and someone else in your household both need a grocery box, text **2BOX**instead. Only one of you needs to send this **2BOX**text.

The grocery boxes are free and there is no delivery charge. You can stop the service at any time by texting **STOPBOX** to 0786 006 4525.

Support from your local council

Call the free helpline on 0800 111 4000 to talk to someone from your council who can:

- help you access shielding support services without needing to use the SMS Shielding Service
- support you to access food after shielding is paused, if you need this help
- provide additional items if the weekly grocery boxes do not meet your needs
- help you bring boxes inside or find out what has happened to a missing box
- change the address for your weekly grocery boxes

Please note that the SMS Shielding Service number only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls. Also, the SMS Shielding Service is not checked by a person and cannot respond to questions. The SMS Shielding Service is can only respond with a pre-programmed reply to general questions.

Scottish Government Shielding route map (for those at highest risk)

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Decisions will be kept under review as the evidence base on the impact of the virus and the effectiveness of different interventions builds.
Further guidance will be available for each change on mygov.scot/shielding.

Hygiene helps: No matterwhat our shielding advice is, it is important to regularly wash your hands and clean hard surfaces. Everyone should also cover their mouths to cough. This should either be into a tissue which you can dispose straightaway, otherwise into your bent elbow.

	Up to 10 July	**From 10 July**	**Expected 17 July**	**Expected 24 July**	**Shielding paused**
		Confirmed 8 July	**Aim to confirm 16 July**	**Aim to confirm 23 July**	**Confirm before August**
How to protect yourself and others	Physically distance from people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	Physical distancing guidance for the "at risk" group in Scotland
	Face coverings if you can't physically distance	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)
Seeing family and friends	**Meet outdoors** with up to 8 people from **only 1 household**	**Meet outdoors** with up to 8 people from **2 households**	Meet outdoors with up to 8 people from 2 households	**Meet indoors** with up to **8 people** from **2 households**, with physical distancing	Guidance on meeting people same as wider population, but maintain **physical distancing**
		Use of **indoor toilets** if visiting **people outdoors**	Use of indoor toilets if visiting people outdoors	Use of indoor toilets if visiting **people indoors**	Use of indoor toilets if visiting people indoors
		Can form an extended household[1]	Can form an extended household [1]	Can form an extended household [1]	Can form an extended household [1]
Getting around	Travel up to 5 miles for outdoor exercise	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel
	Avoid public transport	Avoid public transport	Avoid public transport	Canuse public transportwearing a face covering	Can use public transport wearing a face covering
	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Can go in a car **with someone you do not live**	Can go in a car with someone you do not

				with	live with

[1] Someone who lives alone, or who lives only with children under 18, can agree with another household to form an "extended household". This means that they are treated as being part of that household. You can visit this household indoors and stay over, without physical distancing.

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Leisure, shopping, and eating out	Avoid staying anywhere outside your own home	Travel to self-catering accommodation[2] and second homes allowed	Can use **all holiday accommodation**	Can use all holiday accommodation	Can use all holiday accommodation
	Avoid going inside any building other than your own home			Can go to **pubs and restaurants with outdoor spaces**	Can attend **indoor pubs and restaurants**
			Can go **to outdoor markets**	Can go into **indoor shops, pharmacies and indoor markets** Can attend **hairdressers and barbers**[3]	Can go into indoor shops, pharmacies and indoor markets Can attend hairdressers and barbers
			Can visit **outdoor gardens**	Can visit **museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas**	Can visit museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas
Schools and childcare	Since 30 June, some children and young people will receive letters explaining they no longer need to shield	Children under 12, who live with someone shielding, do not need to avoid physical contact when playing outside with others under 12		Can use childcare providers	Children who had been asked to shield can return to school – date to be confirmed
Work	Work from home,	Work from home,	Work from home,	Work from home,	Can return to Covid safe

	where possible	where possible	where possible	where possible	workplace

[2] "Self-catering accommodation" must have no shared facilities and must be accessible via an external door.
[3] Check with the company owner that they have put in place "enhanced hygiene measures". They will know what this means.