



14 December 2020

Primary Care

Searches: people with Chronic Kidney Disease stage 5

Dear Colleagues,

On the 30 October the interim CMO wrote to clinicians giving details regarding the addition of Down's Syndrome (adults) and Chronic Kidney Disease Stage 5 (CKD5) to the 'High Risk' group (Shielding) should they come into contact with COVID-19 infection.

Many people with Chronic Kidney Disease Stage 5 have been identified through coordinated searches by regional Renal Units. In addition, your clinical IT system should now have been updated with the code to identify these people. [9d44. Potential infectious contact "High risk category for developing complications for COVID-19 infection"].

We are aware that not all patients will have been identified through Renal Units and would therefore be grateful if you could identify any other people with CKD5 that have *not already been flagged* on your system. To help you with this, a search has been created within the Escro Shielding Report (Albasoft software <http://www.escro.co.uk/>) which you may have used earlier during the pandemic.

If you haven't previously used this it can be downloaded from

http://www.escro.co.uk/escro_shielding/escro_shielding.htm

These searches will allow you to identify any patients coded as having CKD5 who have not been previously identified as at 'Highest Risk'. The searches will only identify patients whose most recent CKD code indicates it is Stage 5 and makes no calculations from eGFR results.

We hope that most patients will have already been detected through the Renal clinics so the number detected by the Escro search will be small. It may be appropriate for a check of patient records for the people picked up by the searches to ensure their diagnosis of CKD5 is still appropriate.

As a reminder, in line with previous QOF requirements, the definition for coding a patient with CKD5 is as follows:

Patients with a sustained eGFR of less than 15ml/min. , with two eGFRs at least three months apart that are <15ml/min.

Do not include:

People who have previously met CKD5 criteria - i.e. eGFR \leq 15 for at least three months and have then recovered to a consistently better function. Where this occurred it is advised that the CKD5 coding remains and a subsequent CKD diagnosis code, that reflects the new level, is added to the patients record.

People on Renal replacement therapy should have previously been added to the Shielding list by the Renal units.

We would appreciate your assistance in informing your local Shielding co-ordinator of people with CKD5 who have not previously been registered on the Shielding list in the usual way asking that they are added as Group 7 for CKD5. This is to ensure they receive the specific letter detailing support for them (see attached). There is no requirement for you to discuss this with the patient, the central letter will provide them with advice of what this means and how they can access support. Your IT system will also be automatically updated with a code in due course, in line with current fortnightly updates from Public Health Scotland.

Once again, we greatly appreciate your help with this, particularly as we are aware of the pressure of workload you are under.

Yours sincerely

GP Shielding identification team

Annex A

..... 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

Your Community Health Index (CHI) number: <<CHI>>

You have been added to the shielding list
Please note this does not mean we are asking you to shield

Dear Patient,

We are sending you this letter because we have added you to the shielding list. This is because of a health condition you have. Your clinician has identified you as being at higher risk of becoming seriously ill if you catch coronavirus. The shielding list allows us to support people who are at the highest clinical risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). But we are not asking you to shield.

If you live in a residential care or nursing home, or your loved one is living in a care home, further information and guidance will shortly be available to you. Information about how to access this will be available at www.gov.scot/carehomevisiting

Though we are not asking you to shield, we are continuing to support you by:

- keeping you on the list of shielding people, so we can contact you with any changes (you can ask to be removed from the list by asking your GP or hospital clinician);
- sending you information and updates by letter and by text from our text messaging service
- giving you access to up-to-date advice and guidance at www.mygov.scot/shielding to help you understand your individual risk and what you can do to keep yourself safe in daily life.

As you know, to keep you safe, we now have five protection levels in Scotland. Protection levels are set in response to infection data in local areas. There is different guidance for each protection level. You can use the postcode checker to check the protection level for your area at www.gov.scot/coronaviruslevels

Extra advice for people considered at higher risk from coronavirus

You should follow the protection level guidance for the general population as a minimum. There is extra advice for you covering areas like work, school, shopping and contact with others. You can find this extra advice at www.mygov.scot/shielding and in the table with this letter.

We believe that you should be able to make decisions for your own situation. This means thinking about the number of cases in your local area, your own health situation, advice from your GP, consultant or clinician, and the risk different activities carry.

Remember to follow FACTS to stay safe

Face coverings – wear them in shops, inside restaurants and cafes, and on public transport

Avoid crowded places

Clean your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds

Two metre distance – maintain physical distancing from anyone who's not in your household

Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

Keeping up-to-date

You can keep up-to-date with any changes by tuning into the First Minister's briefings. You'll find the latest advice for people on the shielding list on www.mygov.scot/shielding

We can text important updates to your mobile phone, so you hear about changes as they happen.

To join the Scottish Government's free text messaging service, text your Community Health Index (CHI) number to 07860 064525. Your CHI number is the 10-digit number at the top of the shielding letters we've sent you. You do not need to text any other information.

If you cannot join the text messaging service or need to ask a question about shielding, call the free National Assistance Helpline number on 0800 111 4000 or text 0800 111 4114. The helpline is open Monday to Friday during business hours to get support from your local council.

The Scottish Government has included further advice and information about available support with this letter. Please do read it carefully.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregor Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

DR GREGOR SMITH
INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Information and support to help you keep safe Protect Scotland app

Download the free Protect Scotland app at www.protect.scot to help stop COVID-19 spreading again. If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, the app will send you an alert asking you to self-isolate for 14 days. 'Close contact' means being within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes. If you start to develop symptoms you should call 111.

You can also use the app to send anonymous alerts to let other people know if you test positive. The app does not use up much data, and does not record your identity or location.

Find out about COVID-19 cases in your area

Public Health Scotland publish data by neighbourhood areas at www.publichealthscotland.scot/covidcasesbyneighbourhood and also information including:

- testing numbers
- deaths data
- hospital and intensive care admissions

To view a neighbourhood from the 'Cases by neighbourhood' 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.
- 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.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19

If it's an emergency, whether related to COVID-19 or not, phone 999. If you think you have developed symptoms of COVID-19, phone the NHS on 111. Symptoms include:

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

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

This advice is for anyone who has had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer within the last 6 weeks. If you feel ill, phone someone straight away. Call the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711 or the emergency number given to you by your consultant. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to COVID-19.

If you, or the person you care for, have Down's syndrome

Down's Syndrome Scotland is operating a helpline which you can call between 8am and 8pm from Monday to Friday if you are looking for advice and support. The number to call Down's Syndrome Scotland and speak to one of their Family Support team is 0300 030 2121. All calls to this number are charged at the price of a local call and many mobile phone providers include 0300 numbers in their 'free-to-call' bundles.

Mental health and wellbeing

If you're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, depressed or worried, please call:

Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87	Monday to Thursday: 6pm – 2am Friday to Monday: 6pm – 6am
Samaritans	116 123	Every day: 24 hours a day
British Red Cross	0808 196 3651	Every day: 10am – 6pm

You can also book GP appointments for support. Help is available online too from the Scottish Association of Mental Health at www.samh.org.uk.

Access to healthcare

You should follow the advice your clinician provides as they know you and your condition personally. You should always ask your healthcare team if you're unsure about any health advice or treatment.

Your needs will be assessed by a clinician as part of your GP or hospital care. Your clinician may decide it is safest to carry out an appointment over the telephone. They might also suggest Near Me – a video calling service used by the NHS. Other times, a face to face appointment may happen at your home or in a practice, health centre or hospital.

Flu Vaccine

You will now have received 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:

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

Face coverings

The Scottish Government mandate the wearing of face coverings on transport, most indoor public places and communal areas in workplaces. Face coverings play a role in preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

If you need a face covering exemption card, apply on the Face Covering Exemption Card website: www.exempt.scot

Children under 5 do not need to wear a face covering.

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

If outdoors, you should maintain physical distancing as much as you can. This is the best way to stay safe. If it is difficult to maintain physical distancing while you are outdoors, you should wear a face covering.

Getting outdoors and staying active

We know that going out of your front door can be an anxious time. Try to remember that coronavirus is much less likely to pass from person to person when you're outdoors.

Staying active is good for your mental health and wellbeing. When you are feeling able to, we encourage you to do whatever level of physical activity feels comfortable for you.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is very important for keeping your bones and muscles healthy.

We recommend that everyone consider taking a daily 10 microgram (10µg) supplement of vitamin D. Particularly during the autumn and winter months when we are unable to make vitamin D from sunlight. Find more information at www.mygov.scot/shielding.

For most people taking a 10-microgram supplement of vitamin D daily is safe. But there are some who should seek advice first due to certain health conditions or medication. This is because taking too much vitamin D can cause calcium to build up in your body and this can weaken your bones and damage your heart and kidneys.

You should seek advice from your clinician, specialist nurse, pharmacist, midwife or health visitor if you:

- have known hypercalcaemia (high levels of calcium in the blood - this can be associated with high levels of parathyroid hormone, kidney stones, certain cancers, and chronic kidney disease)
- have sarcoidosis (an inflammatory condition which can affect various parts of the body including the lungs and glands)
- take digoxin
- take calcium or other vitamin supplements already.

Going to work

We continue to urge all employers to support staff to work from home wherever possible. Employers should make sure their staff can work from home if possible.

If you cannot work from home, most workplaces can be made safe. It is an employers responsibility to take all reasonable steps to make your workplace safe for you. In addition, it is important that your employer understands your individual risk. You can use the workplace risk assessment tool which will calculate your COVID-Age to share your individual risk with your employer and consider what additional adjustments and arrangements need to be in place to keep you safe at work. [You can find](#) further guidance and the COVID-Age calculator [at www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding). [This guidance does not replace medical advice.](#)

You should continue to follow the extra advice set out in the table while at work. You should discuss any changes needed to make your workplace and duties safe with your manager or your employer. You can also get further advice from:

- Occupational Health services provided by your employer, where available
- a Health and Safety representative in your workplace

- your workplace's Human Resources (HR) department
- your trade union or professional body

If you need this letter right away, phone the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000 or text 0800 111 4114. It's open Monday to Friday, business hours. You can also email: Shielding.Correspondence@gov.scot.

Help with money

If you're worried about money, you can get help and support online, through the Money Talk Team at www.moneytalkteam.org.uk. Or you can call them on 0800 085 7145.

Going to school

We expect all children who are on the shielding list to be able to go to school as normal. Unless they are given advice not to from their GP or healthcare provider, or if you live in an area that is at protection Level 4.

In Level 4 areas, children and young people on the shielding list should stay off school, college and regulated childcare services such as nurseries. But you can ask your child's clinical team about an individual risk assessment. This may allow the young person to keep attending.

If you are the parent or guardian of a child or young person who is on the shielding list in a Level 4 area, you will receive a separate letter from the Chief Medical Officer which will have advice about childcare at home and what to do if you cannot work because of your caring responsibilities.

You can find information about your child's safety when going to school on the Parent Club website at www.parentclub.scot/articles/reopening-schools-faqs. If you're worried about this, you can speak to your child's school.

This resource may also be made available on request in the following formats



 **PHS.HealthData@phs.scot**

 **0800 111 4000**

Use the subject line 'translation request' if you send an email. Include these details about the person who needs the different format:

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

Please tell us if we should always send information in this format. If you've asked before for translations of the information we send, it's on its way to you.

Data Protection Statement

You have been identified from either your GP practice, local Health Board or securely stored national data in order that we could write to you. We want to reassure you that this information has only been shared in a limited way within the NHS in Scotland and did not include your medical record. During this time, we will keep your contact details in case we need to contact you again. We will also notify your GP and your Health Board that you have been contacted in order that they can provide appropriate support. To provide some of the support noted above, we may share your contact details only with your council. This is only so that they can support you during this difficult time. This action is only being taken due to the current COVID-19 outbreak. We want to assure you that your local council would not receive any details of your medical condition or health record.

You can request your contact details to be removed from the shielding list by asking your GP or hospital clinician.