



23 March 2021

**IMPORTANT: PERSONAL**

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

## Updated advice

**This letter replaces your previous shielding notification. It is similar to a fit note. It is valid until 30 June 2021. Use it to show your employer you cannot go into the workplace if you live or work in a Level 4 area.**

Dear XXXXX,

I'm writing to you with some new advice for people on the shielding list. This is because the Protection Level guidance has been updated in Scotland. Restrictions will also ease over the coming weeks and Scotland will begin to move out of lockdown.

You can find my updated advice for people on the shielding list at each Protection Level summarised in the table at the end of this letter. It's also online at [www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding). Because you are at the highest risk of falling severely ill from coronavirus, I suggest you continue to follow the extra advice<sup>1</sup> in the table.

### **Going back to work, school, college and university from 26 April 2021**

From 26 April, I expect that people on the shielding list who are currently at Level 4 will be able to return to the workplace, if they cannot work from home. College and university students and young people at school should also be able to return at this time.

This is because, from this date, all areas now in Level 4 should move down to Level 3 or lower. I will let you know if this changes.

The criteria for moving up or down a level have been tightened in Scotland. This means that at Level 3 infection rates will be low enough to greatly reduce your risk of catching coronavirus.

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<sup>1</sup> The extra measures set out in this letter (and the table enclosed) which you are advised to follow to lower your risk of catching coronavirus count as "shielding measures" for the purposes of the Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020

You should continue to follow the public health advice to protect yourself. There's also advice about making your workplace safe attached to this letter.

## **Working in Level 4**

If you live or work in an area that's in Level 4 now, or if it goes up to Level 4 in the future, you should keep working from home if you can. If you cannot work from home, my advice is that you should not go to work while the area in which you live or work is in Level 4. You should follow this advice until the areas where you live and work have gone down to Level 3, or lower. This applies even once Level 4 areas are no longer in lockdown. This is a change to the previous advice at Level 4.

You can use this letter, which is called your 'shielding notification', to show your employer that you cannot go into the workplace. This letter is similar to a fit note. You can use it at any time the area you live or work is in lockdown or Level 4, up until 30 June.

There's advice about financial support if you can't go into the workplace in the information attached to this letter.

## **School, college and university in Level 4**

Students and young people who are on the shielding list are also generally advised not to attend school, college or university in person in a Level 4 area. However, your clinical team might advise carrying out an individual risk assessment. It may be possible to make changes to let you attend school, college or university if you want to.

If you're a student who is sharing term-time accommodation with others, discuss any concerns with your accommodation provider or institution to see what support can be put in place.

## **If you've been vaccinated**

My advice is that you should continue to follow the guidance for people on the shielding list, even if you've had one or both doses of the coronavirus vaccine. This includes the advice about work.

We know the vaccine offers significant protection against the virus, but we do not yet have evidence of exactly how effective it is for the people on the shielding list. You must continue to be cautious to help keep yourself safe.

## **If you've not yet been vaccinated**

Over 90% of people on the shielding list have now had the first dose of their vaccination. I strongly encourage those of you who have not yet had your vaccine to do so as soon as you can, if there's no medical reason why you should not.

If you're on the shielding list but have not yet been offered an appointment, visit [www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccineinvitations](http://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccineinvitations) or call the free COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013 (open daily, 8am to 8pm).

## **Adults who live with you**

If you live with people who work, they should work from home if they can. If they cannot work from home, they can go to work, even in Level 4 areas. Their employers have a responsibility to make sure their workplace and duties are COVID-safe. Your household member should discuss any concerns with their employer. They should tell their employer they live with someone who is on the shielding list. There's advice about making workplaces safe attached to this letter.

People who live with you should continue to follow FACTS guidance even if they've had the vaccine, to reduce the chance of spreading the virus.

## **Children and young people who live with you**

We are currently planning for children and young people who are not on the shielding list to be able to return to school after the Easter holidays, if they have not already done so. This applies to children or young people who live with someone on the shielding list too. They should follow their school's safety measures, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings. I would also encourage your children to make use of the twice-weekly at-home Lateral Flow Testing offered to pupils at all secondary schools. It is important that any positive results from these Lateral Flow devices are followed up with confirmatory PCR tests. If you have concerns, talk to the school about steps they can take to address these. Schools should be as flexible as possible.

I hope to be able to update this guidance soon, as we learn more about the impact of vaccination.

Yours sincerely,

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

**DR GREGOR SMITH**  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

## **Making your workplace safe**

Employers have a legal duty to make the workplace safe for all staff. It is the employer's responsibility to regularly carry out workplace risk assessments and take steps to reduce coronavirus risk. Employees also have a responsibility to follow safe working practices.

Find workplace risk assessment guidance at [www.gov.scot/covid-workplace-risk](http://www.gov.scot/covid-workplace-risk). This includes a link to a COVID-age tool. You can use this to highlight your own personal risk to your employer.

If you still feel unsafe at work after speaking to your employer, you can get more advice from:

- Occupational Health Services (if your employer offers them)
- the Health and Safety representative in your workplace HR (your employer's Human Resources team, if there is one)
- your trade union or professional body
- the Citizens Advice website at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk) or the free Citizens Advice Helpline on 0800 028 1456, (Monday to Friday, office hours)

## **Financial help if you cannot work**

Some employers may offer financial help if you cannot work due to the advice in this letter, or for other reasons related to coronavirus. For example, caring responsibilities. You should also ask your employer if they can offer any other financial support not mentioned below.

## **Furlough**

Your employer may be able to furlough you through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The scheme runs until 30 September 2021. If furloughed, you will stay off work but get up to 80% of your normal pay. Your employer will also keep paying your National Insurance and pension contributions.

## **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and benefits**

If you are not furloughed, you may be able to get Statutory Sick Pay, Universal Credit, or other benefits. To find out what benefits you can get, speak to your employer, visit [www.gov.uk/browse/benefits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits), or visit Citizens Advice Scotland at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk).

## **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)**

If you're self-employed and have lost income during coronavirus, you may be able to claim a grant from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). You can claim online from late April 2021 until 31 May 2021. Find details at [www.gov.uk/hmrc/self-employment-support-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc/self-employment-support-scheme)

## **Money advice**

For money advice visit [www.moneytalkteam.org.uk](http://www.moneytalkteam.org.uk) or call Money Talk for free on 0800 085 7145.

## **Priority vaccinations for unpaid carers**

Unpaid carers can register for the coronavirus vaccine at [register.vacs.nhs.scot](http://register.vacs.nhs.scot) or by calling the free COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013 (open daily, 8am to 8pm).

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.

Find translations and other formats for past shielding letters at [www.gov.scot/shielding-letters](http://www.gov.scot/shielding-letters)

### **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.

## Extra protection level advice for people at highest risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

This is additional advice. Consider what protection is right for you based on your circumstances..

**All levels:** we will not ask you to distance from people within your own homes or to stop taking outdoor exercise.

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Contact with others	Follow the level 0 advice to the general population	Follow the level 1 advice to the general population	<b>Reduce</b> the number of people or households you have face to face contact with <b>Avoid</b> 1-metre zones (areas which allow physical distancing of only 1 metre)	<b>Limit</b> meeting people outside your own household, avoid indoor public spaces	<b>Minimise</b> contact with people outside your own household if you can. You should not take public transport
Shopping	Strictly follow the shopping guidelines for the general population	Strictly follow the shopping guidelines for the general population	Strictly follow the shopping guidelines for the general population	Strictly follow the shopping guidelines for the general population. Limit the number of times you go to a shop. Shop at quieter times	Strictly follow the shopping guidelines for the general population. Limit the number of times you go to a shop. Shop at quieter times
If you cannot work from home	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make any changes	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make any changes	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make any changes	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make any changes	The Chief Medical Officer advises you not to go to work, unless you can work from home. The Chief

	<p>needed to your workplace to protect you. Most workplaces can be made safe.</p>	<p>needed to your workplace to protect you. Most workplaces can be made safe.</p>	<p>needed to your workplace to protect you. Most workplaces can be made safe. Discuss any concerns with your employer.</p>	<p>needed to your workplace to protect you.</p> <p>Speak to your employer to ensure all appropriate protections are in place.</p> <p>Most workplaces can be made safe.</p>	<p>Medical Officer has sent you a letter which is similar to a fit note. It will last until 30 June 2021. You can use it while your area or workplace is in level 4.</p> <p>Use this letter to stay off work if you cannot work from home.</p>
<p>Education and formal childcare</p>	<p>Follow the level 0 advice to the general population</p>	<p>Follow the level 1 advice to the general population</p>	<p>Follow the level 2 advice to the general population</p>	<p>Parents or guardians should discuss with their clinician whether children should still attend</p>	<p>Children on the shielding list should not attend in person if they live or attend school, college, or formal childcare in a level 4 area. However, a child's clinician may advise that an individualised risk assessment can be undertaken.</p> <p>Students who are on the shielding list are also advised not to attend college or university in person. Students that are sharing term-time</p>

					accommodation with others should discuss any concerns with their accommodation provider or institution to see what support can be put in place.
People who live with someone on the shielding list	Follow the level 0 advice to the general population	Follow the level 1 advice to the general population	Follow the level 2 advice to the general population	Follow the level 3 advice to the general population	<p>Children and young people who live with someone on the shielding list can go to school. They should follow the school's safety measures.</p> <p>Household members who cannot work from home can still go into the workplace.</p> <p>Employers have a responsibility to make sure the workplace and duties are COVID-safe. Strictly follow the FACTS guidance.</p>