



8 January 2021

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 and your clinician considers you to be at the highest risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). We use the shielding list to support people at highest risk, but we are not asking you to shield.

We will shortly give more guidance for people who live in residential care or nursing homes. You can find this at www.gov.scot/carehomevisiting.

To keep you safe, we 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.

On Tuesday 5 January, the Scottish Government put new lockdown restrictions in place for all areas of Scotland that are at Level 4. These restrictions will last at least until the end of January. They are needed to help reduce the spread of the new coronavirus strain.

You can find the lockdown guidance for the general population at www.gov.scot/stayathome.

These lockdown restrictions apply across most of Scotland, except for some island areas. These islands are currently in Level 3: Orkney, Shetland, Na h-Eileanan Siar (Western Isles), Coll, Colonsay, Erraid, Gometra, Iona, Islay, Jura, Mull, Oronsay, Tiree, Ulva, and all islands in Highland except Skye.

Level 3 guidance is at www.gov.scot/coronaviruslevel3.

We also have some extra advice at each level specifically for people on the shielding list. We suggest that you follow the extra advice¹ at each of the levels set out in the table with this letter and also available online at www.mygov.scot/shielding.

You can also call the free National Assistance Helpline for more information on the advice at each level. Call 0800 111 4000 (Monday to Friday during office hours).

Guidance on going to work

Everyone who can work from home should do so and employers should make sure their staff can work from home where possible.

If you cannot work from home, most workplaces can be made safe, even if you are at the highest risk. It is your employer's responsibility to make your workplace and duties safe for you. This may include changing the way in which you work, to support you to follow the extra advice. Employees also have a responsibility to comply with safe working practices.

However, during this current lockdown which began on 5 January, **I am advising you that if you cannot work from home, you should not attend work for as long as these restrictions (lockdown) are in place in the area where you live or work.** I am also advising that you should not use public transport (including taxis) while these additional protection measures are in place.

If your employer cannot make it possible for you to work from home, you will be able to use this letter as evidence for your employer to show that you should not go into work, including for Statutory Sick Pay purposes. All you need to do is show them this letter, which serves a similar purpose to a fit note, and is called your Shielding Notification. You do not need a separate fit note from your GP.

If you are not attending your workplace due the advice in this letter, your employer, at their discretion, may be able to furlough you through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which has now been extended until April 2021. If you are furloughed, HMRC will give a grant to your employer to cover 80% of your normal salary, and your employer will need to pay National Insurance and pension contributions. I encourage you to discuss this directly with your employer.

Otherwise you may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay, Universal Credit, or other benefits, during this period. To find out further information about what benefits you may be entitled to, speak to your employer, visit www.gov.uk/browse/benefits or visit Citizens Advice Scotland at www.cas.org.uk Some employers may offer additional financial support for employees who are off

¹ 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

work for coronavirus-related reasons which may be set out in your terms and conditions of employment. To find out what financial support you will get, you should contact your employer.

The Job Retention Scheme does not apply if you are self-employed or to any income from self-employment. However, you may qualify for support under the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme. The online service for this grant is available at www.gov.uk

This additional advice on going to work does not apply to areas that remain at level 3. If you live and work in a level 3 area, you can continue to go to work if the workplace can be made safe. Further information can be found at www.gov.scot/covid-workplace-risk. This includes a workplace risk assessment (COVID-Age) tool which you can use to show your employer your assessment of your personal risk. This can help you to discuss with your employer any additional adjustments or arrangements needed to make your workplace and duties safe for you.

Guidance on staying home and meeting others

You must stay at home whenever possible. This is the best way to stay safe. In lockdown, by law you will only be able to leave your house for specific reasons. These include education, caring responsibilities, essential shopping and exercise. You can also still visit someone in your extended household. Only two people from two different households can meet outside. There is more advice at www.gov.scot/stayathome

Attending school, college or regulated childcare services

Arrangements for learning at home are now in place until 1 February. This will be reviewed in mid-January. This applies to all pupils, across the whole of Scotland, at nursery, primary and secondary schools, except for vulnerable children, and children of key workers.

At level 4 and during this national lockdown, our general advice is that children and young people who are on the shielding list should not attend school, college or regulated childcare services such as nurseries. However, you should consult your child's secondary care (hospital) clinical team who may advise that an individualised risk assessment could be undertaken with the school, college or nursery and arrangements put in place which may allow your child to continue to attend when establishments re-open.

Public transport

We advise that you should not use public transport including taxis in a level 4 area or in an area under additional protective lockdown measures.

Keeping up to date

You can find out about any changes by tuning into the First Minister's briefings. You'll also find the latest advice for people on the shielding list on www.mygov.scot/shielding

We can text important updates to your mobile phone. 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 office hours.

The rest of this letter includes further information on support you can access.

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

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

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, call the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711 or the emergency number given to you by your consultant. Call straight away 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

You can get advice and support from Down's Syndrome Scotland's helpline. Call 0300 030 2121 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm). Calls are charged at the price of a local call. 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 your clinician's advice, as they know you and your condition. Always ask your healthcare team if you're unsure about any health advice or treatment.

Keep attending your medical appointments as usual, even if you live in a Level 4 area.

Face coverings

By law you must wear a face covering in most indoor public places, communal areas in workplaces, and on public transport. But note that at Level 4 and during lockdown people on the shielding list should avoid all public transport, including taxis. Your face covering can be made of cloth if you wish, so long as it covers your mouth and nose. Children under 5 do not need to wear a face covering. If you need a face covering exemption card, apply on the Face Covering Exemption Card website: www.exempt.scot

Getting outdoors and staying active

We're not advising you to stop going outside, which we know is good for mental and physical health. You should stay at home as much as possible but you can still go out for exercise and essential shopping or medicines

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is very important for keeping your bones and muscles healthy. We recommend taking a daily 10 microgram (10µg) supplement of vitamin D, particularly during autumn and winter. 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. 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.

Priority access to supermarket online delivery slots

If you, your child or someone you care for is on the shielding list, you can sign up for a priority online supermarket delivery slot. The supermarkets that offer this service are Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose.

If you sign up for the service, we'll pass your details to these supermarkets to allow them to add you to their priority booking list. Whilst this doesn't guarantee you a slot, which will be dependent on availability, it will give you access to view booking slots further in advance.

Registering for a priority online delivery slot using our text message service

If you are a parent or guardian of a child on the shielding list you'll need to register using the child's name. If you are a carer, use the name of the person you care for.

- If you are already on the Scottish Government Shielding text messaging service, sign up by texting **1SHOP** to 07860 064525 from your mobile.
- If you are not on our text messaging service, join by sending a text from your mobile with your Community Health Index (CHI) number to 07860 064525. Your CHI number is the 10-digit number shown at the top of this letter.
- After you have done this, text **1SHOP** to 07860 064525 to sign up for your priority online delivery slot.

If you are already an online customer with Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland or Waitrose

- Your supermarket will email you to let you know how to access the delivery service if they are able to match your details with the information we share with them.
- They will send an email to the account you have registered with. If you don't receive a reply, check that the email address you have registered with is still correct or check your junk mail folder.

If you are new to online supermarket shopping

Once you have registered with our service, you will get texts from GOV.SCOT about the supermarkets that provide online deliveries in your area. The texts will explain how to sign up for these.

We can't guarantee that you will get a slot with your supermarket of choice or that you will always get your preferred slot. What supermarkets are offering is priority access to their booking systems so that you can see slots further in advance. It may take a few weeks for you to get a slot once you have registered. We will pass new registrations to supermarkets on a monthly basis.

How to register for an online priority slot by phone

Please call the free national helpline number on 0800 111 4000 (Monday – Friday business hours). A friend or carer can call for you if you cannot call yourself.

Shopping by phone

Morrisons and Sainsbury's offer the option to order groceries by phone.

To place an order with Morrison's, phone 0345 611 6111 and select option 5.

Morrisons will deliver groceries from a menu of 47 essential items.

Details of how to place an order by phone with Sainsbury's will be sent to you by email if you choose to register with them for priority access.

Alternatively, you can contact the National Helpline which will provide you with details of Sainsbury's priority line for customers.

Shopping in person

If you go to the shops, or if someone goes to the shops for you, make getting your shopping safer by:

- reducing the number of times you go shopping
- going to the shops at quieter times
- putting on your face covering before touching baskets or trolleys
- cleaning the handles of your trolley or basket before you use them
- using hand sanitiser when you arrive and leave

- avoiding touching doors with your hands
- using contactless payment if you can

Supermarkets and shops are making shopping safer

Most shops now have areas where you can clean your hands, trolleys and baskets. There are safety screens at check outs and more self-service and contactless options. Many shops have priority hours for customers who need more help. They have also increased the ways you can shop, or someone else can shop for you.

If you need more information or support to get food and other essentials

You or the person who cares for you can call the free national helpline number on 0800 111 4000 (Monday – Friday business hours). This will connect you to your local authority.

Further information

For more information about buying food and shopping safely please visit:

www.mygov.scot/shielding

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.

Strategic Framework

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



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

This is advice, consider which level of protection is right for you.

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 advice to the general population	Follow the level advice to the general population	Reduce the number of people or households you have face to face contact with Avoid one metre zones	Limit meeting people outside your own household, avoid indoor public spaces	Minimise contact with people outside your own household if you can You should not take public transport
Shopping	Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping	Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping	Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping	Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping and limit the number of times you go to a shop Shop at quieter times	Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping and 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 the necessary adjustments to your workplace to protect you The majority of workplaces can be made safe	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make the necessary adjustments to your workplace to protect you The majority of workplaces can be made safe	Following a workplace risk assessment, your employer should make the necessary adjustments to your workplace to protect you The majority of workplaces can be made safe. Where you have a concern you should discuss this with your employer	Speak to your employer to ensure all appropriate protections are in place The majority of workplaces can be made safe. Where you have a concern you should discuss this with your employer	The majority of workplaces can be made safe. If you have any concerns you should discuss these with your employer However, at this level the Chief Medical Officer will issue a letter which is similar to a fit note and which will last for as long as your area is under Level 4 restrictions. This letter can be used in the few cases where it is not possible to make your workplace safe Please note that this does not automatically mean you should not attend work. You should discuss this further with your employer, and if this results in adequate protection, you can continue to work
School/formal Childcare	Follow the level advice to the general population	Follow the level advice to the general population	Follow the level advice to the general population	Parents or guardians should discuss with their GP or clinician whether children should still attend	Children on the shielding list should not attend in person