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| Directorate for Chief Medical Officer Dr Gregor Smith Interim Chief Medical OfficerSt Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG |  |

[**Patient Name**

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

## ### 2020

**IMPORTANT: PERSONAL**

**Your Community Health Index (CHI) number: [CHI NUMBER]**

**YOU HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE SHIELDING LIST**

Dear Patient,

You’re receiving this letter because your clinician has identified you as being at very high risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is because you have an underlying health condition. This means you have been added to the shielding list. This list allows us to support people who are at the highest risk if the infection.

If you live in a residential care or nursing home, there is specific advice for you. You can find this at [www.gov.scot/carehomevisiting](http://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 request to be removed from the list by asking your GP or hospital clinician);
* sending you information and updates by text from our text messaging service
* giving you access to up-to-date advice and guidance at [www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://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, cases are now rising across Scotland. To keep you safe, the First Minister has announced that we will have 5 protection levels in Scotland.

Protection levels are set in response to infection data in local areas. There is different guidance for each protection level. The protection level for your area is available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/>

**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 also extra advice for areas like work, school, shopping and contact with others. You can find this extra advice at <https://www.mygov.scot/support-shielding/>

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. To help you do this, we will shortly send you a guide to developing a practical protection plan which is right for you.

**Remember to follow FACTS to stay safe**

**F**ace coverings – wear them in shops, inside restaurants and cafes, and on public transport

**A**void crowded places

**C**lean your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds

**T**wo metre distance – maintain physical distancing from anyone who’s not in your household

**S**elf isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

**Keeping up-to-date**

We will tell you immediately if we think you need to shield to stay safe. 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](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding) and on NHS Inform. When you join our text messaging service we’ll send you the latest updates direct to your mobile phone.

Many people on the shielding list have joined the text messaging service from the Scottish Government. This is so they can receive alerts and updates straight to their mobile phones.

If you would like to join, please send a text from your mobile phone with your Community Health Index (CHI) number to **07860 064525**. Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown at the top of this letter. You do not need to text any other information.

Once we’ve got your CHI number, we’ll send you a text to confirm that you’ve joined. Please note that the service only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls.

If you cannot join the text messaging service or need to ask a question about shielding,
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.

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

Yours sincerely,

**DR GREGOR SMITH**

INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

**INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO HELP KEEP YOU SAFE**

**PLEASE READ**

**Protect Scotland app**

Download the free Protect Scotland app to help stop COVID-19 spreading again. The app sends alerts to people who have been in close contact with someone else using the app who has tested positive. Being ‘in close contact with someone’ means being less than 2 metres away from them for at least 15 minutes. The alert will ask you to self-isolate for 14 days.
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. For more information and to download the app visit [www.protect.scot](http://www.protect.scot). Please ask your friends and family to download it too. We know not everyone will be able to or want to access the app. However, they will still benefit from the protection that it offers all of us in Scotland.

**Case numbers in your area**

You can find information on the number of COVID-19 cases in your area at [www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding).

There is a link to a dashboard that Public Health Scotland update daily. We are also working hard on a new tool to show you in more detail what’s happening in your local area. We will let you know further updates on that through the text messaging service soon.

**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:

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| Breathing Space | 0800 83 85 87 | Monday to Thursday: 6pm – 2amFriday 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](http://www.samh.org.uk).

**Access to healthcare**

It is vital that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. To make sure this happens, your needs will be assessed by a clinician as part of your GP or hospital care.

Your clinician may decide it is best 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.

You should follow the advice your clinician provides as they know you and your condition personally. Before COVID-19, clinicians would have advised some people to stop doing certain things or meeting with other people. This was because of their specific health condition or treatment. You should always ask your healthcare team if you’re unsure about any health advice or treatment.

**Flu Vaccine**

You should soon be receiving a letter inviting you and anyone else in your household for a free flu vaccination. If you’re able to get the flu vaccine, you should get this as soon as possible. The flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19 but it will help protect you and your household from this year’s flu.

If you have not received a letter in the next few weeks (<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/flu-vaccine>) or call 0800 22 44 88.

**Face coverings**

You must wear a face covering when visiting shops and on public transport. You must now also wear them inside cafes, restaurants and pubs when not eating and drinking. This is unless you have a health condition or disability that makes wearing one hard for you. You do not need proof of this. Other people who do not need to wear a face covering include:

* children under 5
* people taking certain types of medication
* people who are communicating with someone who lip reads

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. We do not mean a surgical or other medical grade mask.

If outdoors, our advice is to maintain physical distancing as much as you can. This is the best way to stay safe. If you do this, you do not need to wear a face covering outside.

**Getting outdoors and staying active**

We know that going out of your front door can be an anxious time for some people. Getting outside can have lots of physical and mental health benefits. Try to remember that
COVID-19 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.

You may find that you need to improve your strength and balance if you haven’t been as active as you would like. There are lot of things you can do to help you stay steady and reduce your chances of falling. You can find more information at [www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding).

**Vitamin D**

Vitamin D is very important for keeping your bones and muscles healthy. Sunlight is our main source of Vitamin D. The amount of sun needed varies from person to person.
Around 10-15 minutes of unprotected Scottish sun exposure is safe for all. This is one of the many benefits of getting outdoors if you can. Remember to use sunscreen to protect your skin if you are staying in the sun for longer than 15 minutes.

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](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding).

**Going to work**

We continue to urge all employers to support staff to work from home wherever possible. We ask employers to take particular account of those who were shielding.

For those who are unable to work from home, the Scottish Government and medical professionals have made guidance available to you and your employer. A key part of this is a workplace risk assessment tool. You can access this at [www.mygov.scot/shielding](http://www.mygov.scot/shielding). The guidance should not replace medical advice. It can help ensure measures are put into place to give you confidence in going to your workplace.

**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](http://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.

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](http://www.parentclub.scot/articles/reopening-schools-faqs). If you’re worried about this, you can speak to your child’s school.

**How to request this information in a different format**

Other formats of this letter may be available on request. If you or someone you know needs this information in a different format or language, please email phs.healthdata@phs.scot. Use the subject line ‘translation request’.

Please include these details about the person who needs the different format:

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

Please also tell us if we should send information in this format in future. If you prefer, you can call the national helpline on 0800 111 4000 with this information. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

**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.