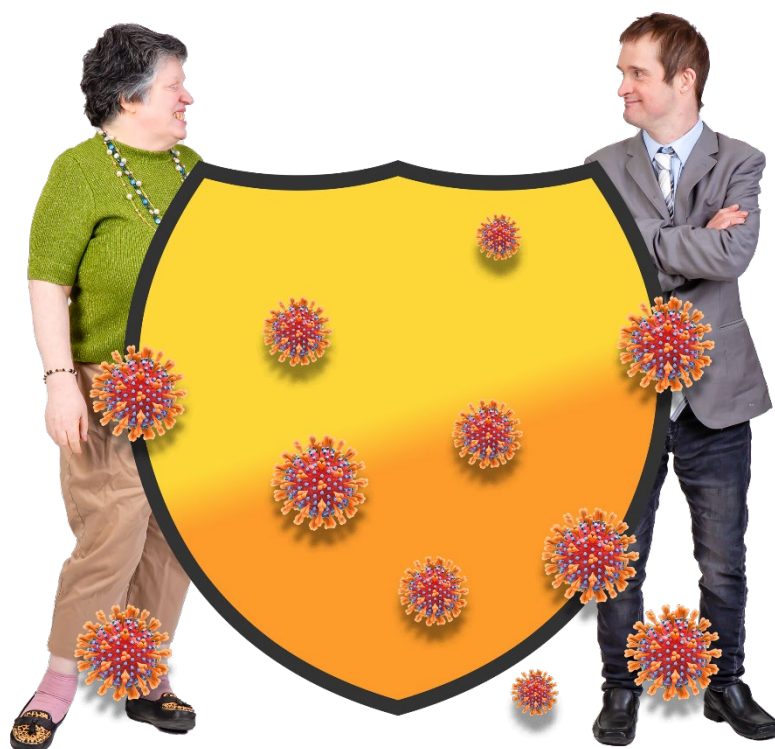


# Important advice on coronavirus



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



## Important advice on coronavirus



This is an Easy Read version of a letter dated **22 June 2020** from



**MATT HANCOCK**, who is Secretary of State for Health and Social Care



**ROBERT JENRICK**, who is Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government



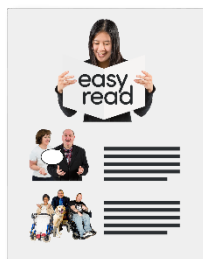
Government advice for everyone in England who is **shielding** is changing very soon.



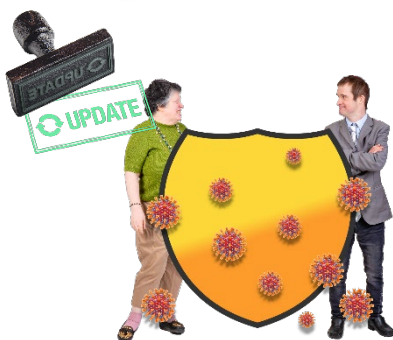
**Shielding guidelines** help to protect people who are very vulnerable and could get very ill if they catch **coronavirus**.



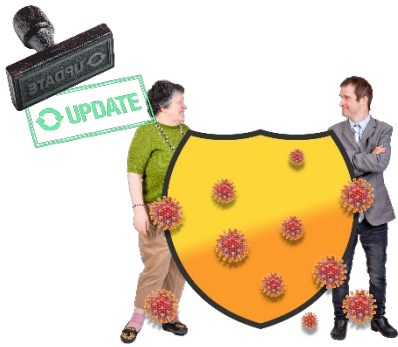
Until the advice changes on **6 July**, you should follow the current **shielding guidelines**.



This Easy Read letter explains:



- how **shielding guidelines** are changing



- why **shielding guidelines** are changing



- what the changes mean for you.



We know **shielding** has not been easy for you or for those living with you.



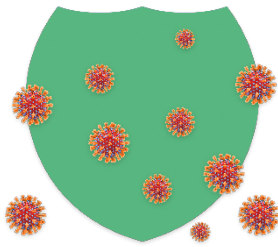
**Thank you** for staying strong.



It was important for you to stay at home when a lot of people in England had **coronavirus**.



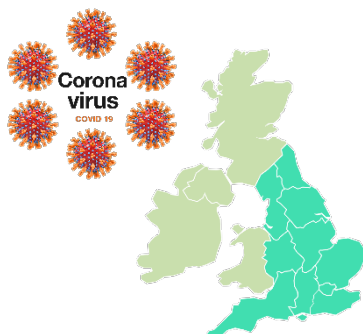
But now less people have **coronavirus**, so the chances of catching **coronavirus** are lower.



## What are the current shielding guidelines?

A few months ago, you were sent a letter that said:

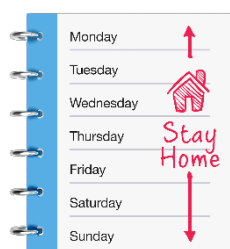
- you are very vulnerable
- you have a disease or health problem that means you could be very ill if you catch **coronavirus**.



The advice was to **shield** yourself because a lot of people had **coronavirus** in England.



So, there was a high chance you could catch **coronavirus** in your daily life.



The advice said:

- stay at home all the time
- only have important face-to-face meetings, for example, when you needed to see your carer.

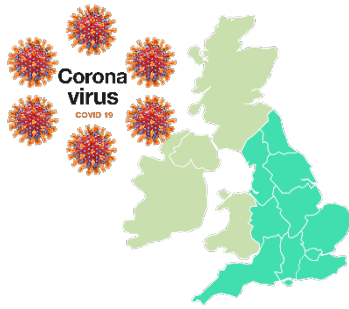


On **1 June**, the advice changed.



You could go outside, away from your home, once a day.





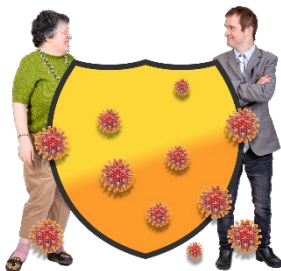
You could do this because it looked like there were less **coronavirus** cases in England.



So the chances of meeting someone with **coronavirus** in your local area were much lower.



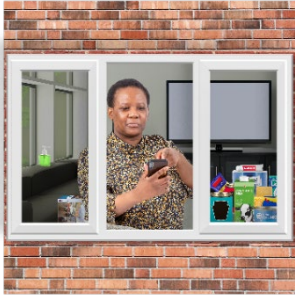
To read the current **shielding guidelines**, go to [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and search for '**shielding**'.



## How are the shielding guidelines changing?



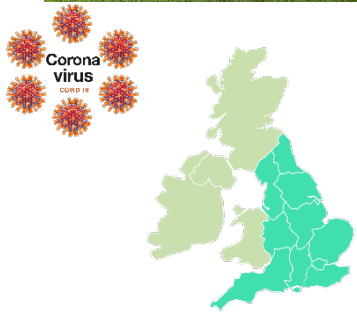
During lockdown, the Government has been clear that



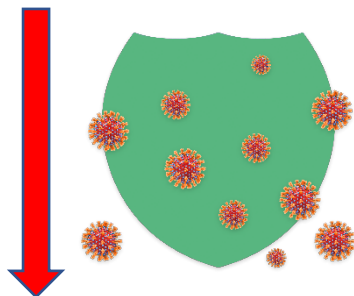
- very vulnerable people need to stay safe



- we want to return to normal life slowly.



Information from scientists tells us that there are less **coronavirus** cases across England.



If **coronavirus** cases keep on getting lower, there will be **2 parts** to the **shielding guidelines**.

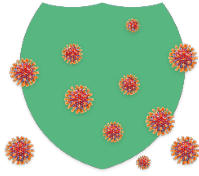


**Part 1** will start on **6 July**.



**Part 2** will start on **1 August**.

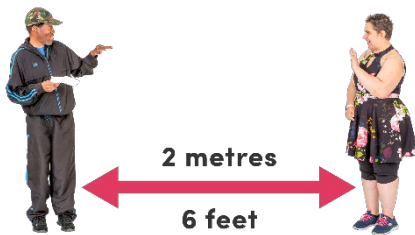




## Part 1 - Shielding guidelines from 6 July



From **6 July** you can meet outside in a group of **up to 6 people**.



You should:

- stay **2 metres away** from others when you can



- stay **at least 1 metre** away, at all other times.



You **do not** need to stay away from people who live in your home.



It is safe for you to meet with other people who do not live with you.

This is called a **support bubble**.



But you can only make a **support bubble**:



- if you are the **only adult** who lives in your home



- if you live with children, but no other adults



- if the other home you make a **support bubble** with is an adult who lives alone.



So, if you live with other adults, you could make a **support bubble** with a grandparent or parent who lives alone.



You cannot make a **support bubble** if you share your home with other adults.



In your **support bubble**, you can:

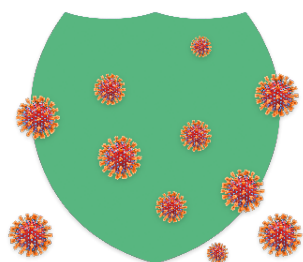
- spend time inside each other's homes



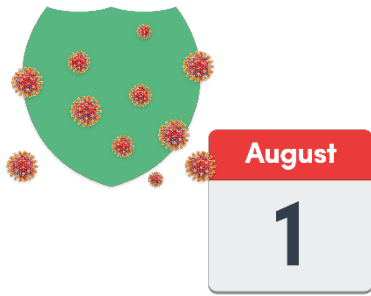
- stay overnight.



You **do not** need to stay away from anyone in your **support bubble**.



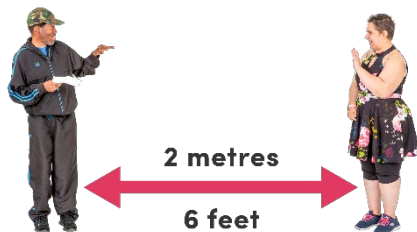
But you should carry on following current **shielding guidelines**.



## Part 2 - Shielding guidelines from 1 August



From **1 August** you **will not** have to follow **shielding guidelines**, but you should:



- stay **2 metres away** from others when you can



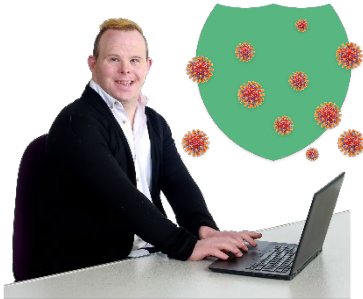
- stay **at least 1 metre away**, at all other times



- stay away from:
  - anyone who **does not** live in your home



- anyone who is not part of your **support bubble**.



- you can go to work if your workplace is safe from **coronavirus**

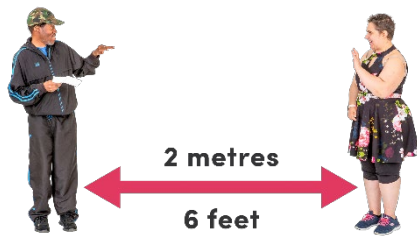


- very vulnerable children can go back to school when their school says they can



- teachers will make sure children:
  - often wash their hands when they are at school.





- stay **2 metres away** from others when they can



- stay **at least 1 metre away**, at all other times



- you can go outside to buy food



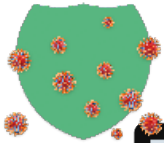
- you can go to places of worship, such as churches and mosques



- you can go outside to exercise.



You should always take care as you are still at risk of serious illness if you catch **coronavirus**.



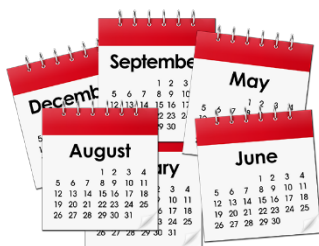
To read the current **shielding guidelines**, go to [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and search for '**shielding**'.



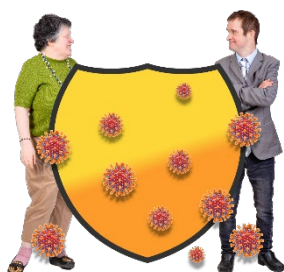
## Will the advice change again?



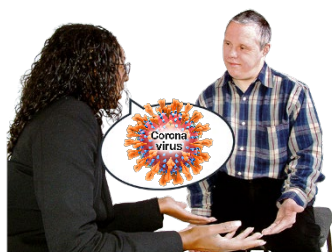
After **1 August** we will keep your name on the **Shielded Patient List**.



We will check how many people catch **coronavirus** over the months ahead.



If **coronavirus** cases go up, we may advise you to shield again.



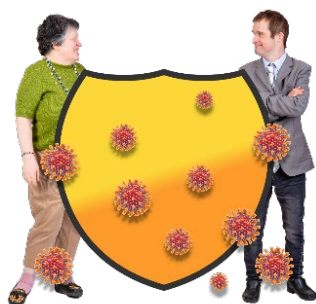
If we change the advice for very vulnerable people again, we will let you know.



## Why is the advice changing?



The Government's advice to people who are shielding has never been the law.



We wrote the **shielding guidelines** when we knew that very vulnerable people had a high chance of catching **coronavirus**.



We know that everyone has different views on how much they are at risk and what is important to them.



We always wanted to support you to look after yourself at this difficult time.



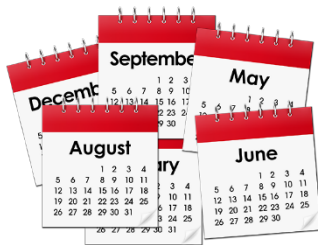
All Government advice about **shielding** has been led by information from scientists.



New information tells us that your chances of getting **coronavirus** are much lower.



So we think now is the right time to change advice for people who are **shielding**.



But we know that it might take a long time to get back to normal daily life again.



## Support to stay at home



If you have food boxes and medicine delivered to you by the Government

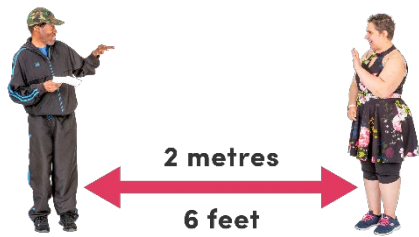


the deliveries will carry on until **31 July**.



This will give you time to start visiting shops, such as supermarkets, again.





But when you go out you should:

- stay **2 metres away** from others when you can.



- stay **at least 1 metre away**, at all other times.



Some supermarkets have made it easier for you to get food delivered to your home.



You can carry on getting food delivered after **31 July** if you have signed up for support.



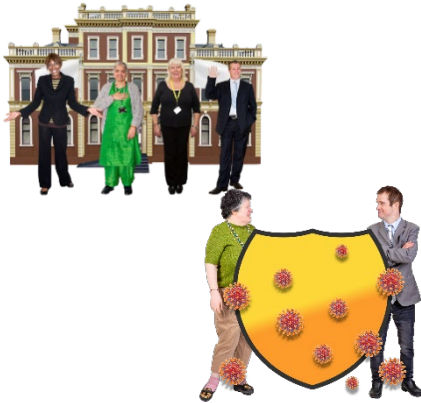
If you have not signed up go to [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and search for **'coronavirus support vulnerable person.'**



- call **0800 028 8327**



You must do this before **17 July.**



Local councils are supporting people who are **shielding**:



- by helping them to stay safe at home



- by making friendly phone calls to stop them feeling lonely



- by making sure they get food for **special diets**.



Local councils will carry on supporting people until **31 July**.



If you are struggling due to **coronavirus**, please go to [www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support](https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support)



Or phone your local council to find out about the support you can get.



## NHS volunteer responders



Support from the **NHS Volunteer Responders** will carry on after **31 July**.



**NHS Volunteer Responders** can help if your friends and family cannot support you:



- to collect your shopping



- to get your medication



- to get other important things you need



- to make friendly phone calls



- to travel to medical appointments, such as visiting your GP.



To get support, you can call  
**0808 196 3646**



from **8 am** to **8 pm**.





You could also speak to **your GP** about getting support to travel.



For more information go to  
[www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](http://www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk)



## Going back to work



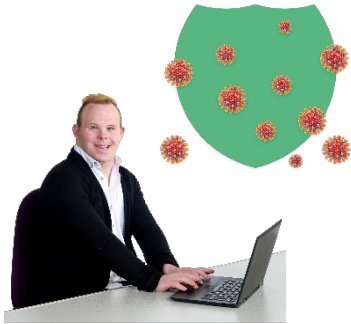
If you cannot work from home, you should **talk** to your employer and agree to a plan about returning to work.



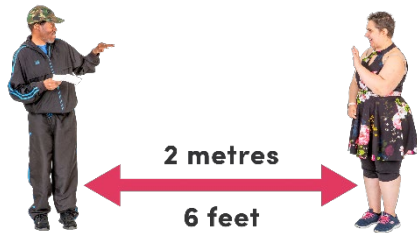
Your employer may need to make **reasonable adjustments** to help you go back to work.



For more information go to [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)



Government advice for employers to make workplaces safe from **coronavirus** includes:



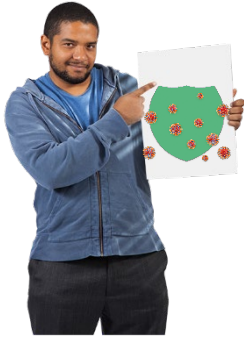
- staying **2 metres away** from others in the workplace when you can



- staying **at least 1 metre away**, at all other times



- often check that the workplace is safe



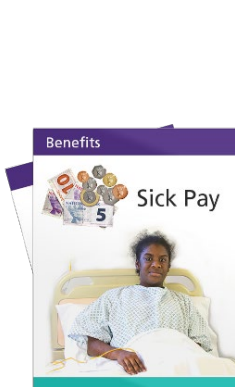
If you are on the **Shielded Patient List**, this letter will be sent to you in the post with your name and personal details at the top.



You can show this letter to your employer:



- to prove that you cannot work outside your home until **31 July**



- to claim for **sick pay** until **31 July**.



## NHS services



You should carry on getting the important **NHS** services you need.



Please contact the NHS if you have an **emergency**.



If you often have appointments for care and treatment, your **GP surgery** or **local hospital** will be in touch.



## Mental health support

It is normal to **worry** or feel depressed during these difficult times.



For advice and support about your **wellbeing**, you can go to:

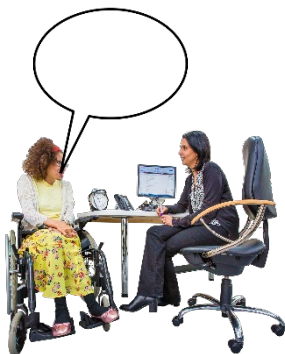


Every Mind Matters

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)



Go to [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search for '**struggling**'.



If you still find it difficult to cope, it is a good idea to speak to your **GP**.





If you have any **coronavirus** symptoms, such as:

- a **new cough** that does not stop



- a **high temperature**



- a **loss** of taste or smell.



you **must** stay at home



and get a test to find out if you have **coronavirus**.



To get a test go to:

- [www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) and search for '**coronavirus test**'.

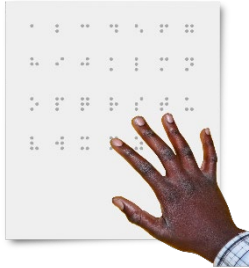


- call the **NHS** on **119**

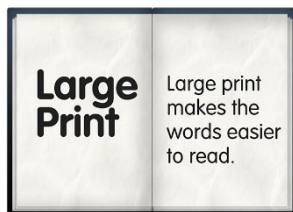


Would you like this letter in:

- audio?



- Braille?



- large print?



Please call the **RNIB** on  
**0303 1239999**.

