Important advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people

You are getting this letter because you are clinically extremely vulnerable.

You can ask someone to read this letter with you to help understand and talk about anything you are worried about.

Clinically extremely vulnerable means you have a condition which mean you are more likely to be very ill if you catch COVID-19.

COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus. It is a new illness that is spreading around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.
Over the next few months, the government is slowly stopping the rules that have been in place to keep everybody safe.

**Shielding**

From 1st April 2021, you will no longer be advised to shield.

To shield means to stay indoors at home as much as possible.

We know that shielding has not been easy for you and we would like to thank you for doing it.

Even though you won’t need to shield anymore, we think you should be careful and protect yourself while COVID-19 is still around.
There is advice about this at the end of this letter. You can choose if you want to follow it or not.

The advice is also available at: **www.gov.uk/coronavirus**

As well as this advice, you must carry on following the rules that are in place for everyone.

This includes rules about seeing people you don’t live with.
COVID-19 vaccinations

Lots of people have now had a **vaccine** to protect them from COVID-19.

A **vaccine** is an injection or jab that helps to stop people getting very poorly from an illness. If you are aged 16 or over, you should have been offered your first vaccination jab.

If you haven’t received your first jab, please contact your doctor (GP).

You should get 2 jabs. You should get the second jab within 12 weeks of getting the first one.

The second jab will make you safer.
Some disabled children aged 12-15 may also be able to get the vaccination. Their parents or guardians should talk to their doctor about this.

Until we find out more about it, other children aged 15 and under should not have the vaccination.

Even though the vaccination will help you to be safe, you could still catch COVID-19 and become ill.

That is why you should still follow the advice in this letter.
Getting support

After 31 March 2021, if you are struggling because of COVID-19, please go to: www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support or contact your local council.
Access to health and care

The NHS and services you need are still open.

If you are worried about COVID-19 and your health, speak to your doctor (GP), someone at the hospital or call NHS 111.

It is safer for you to use the NHS than to cope with things alone.
Letting you know if the advice changes

We want to contact you quickly if the advice changes in the future.

Please make sure your doctor (GP) has your correct details, including your address and your e-mail address if you have one.
Advice for clinical extremely vulnerable people from 1 April 2021

From Thursday, 1 April 2021, you will no longer have to shield, but you should still follow the rules.

We have written a document called ‘COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021’ which explains how the rules will change in the future.

You can see it here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021

As well as following the rules, we think you should also follow this advice to protect you from COVID-19.
Seeing people inside and outside your home

You should:

- stay 2 metres apart from people you don’t live with
- wash your hands often
- be careful not to touch your face.

If you stay away from people you are less likely to catch COVID-19.

It is safer if you meet people you don't live with outdoors.
When the rules say you can meet people inside, you should open the windows.

Try not to go to crowded places.

Carers or visitors that help with your daily needs can still visit you. They should stay 2 metres away from you if possible.

**Support bubble**

You can still use your support bubble or childcare bubble, or make one if you don’t have one.
Work

If you have a job, you should work from home if you can.

If you can’t work from home, you can now go into work.

Your boss has had to make your work safer so that COVID-19 doesn’t spread. They should be able to tell you how they have done this.

If they don’t make your work safe they could be closed down or taken to court.

If you don’t feel safe at work you should tell your local council, union or the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
You should think about how you will get to and from work, and if you can avoid public transport at busy times.

**Access to work**

*Access to work* is a Government scheme that helps disabled people who have a job.

It may pay for the extra cost of working from home if you have a disability.

You can apply for Access to Work at: [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work).

**Furlough**

Furlough is where the Government pays your boss money to pay your wages while you are staying at home.
Your boss may still be able to get money from the Government to pay your wages until 30 September 2021.

If you work for yourself but have been unable to work, you might still be able to get money from the Government until 30 September 2021.

**Benefits**

From 1 April 2021 you won’t be able to get some of the money you may have had from the Government because you were shielding, like Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

You may still be able to get these if you are ill and off work.
If you are treated unfairly
You should not be treated unfairly or sacked because you need to be off work.

There is advice about this here: www.gov.uk/guidance/if-you-need-to-self-isolate-or-cannot-attend-work-due-to-coronavirus

If you need advice or help with problems at work you can contact:

- The Citizen’s Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/
- Acas:
  - Web: www.acas.org.uk/contact
  - Phone: 0300 123 1100
Schools, colleges and other places of education

Clinically extremely vulnerable students should go back to school or college from 1 April 2021.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable do not need to shield and should have gone back to school on 8 March 2021.

We are providing quick COVID-19 tests for:

- schools
- colleges
- school pupils and their households, childcare bubbles and support bubbles
- school staff and their households, childcare bubbles and support bubbles.
The tests can be used to quickly find out whether someone has COVID-19, even if they are not ill.

This will help to keep everyone safe.

Travel

You must wear a face covering on public transport unless you have permission not to.

Try and travel at times when public transport is not busy.

If you need to travel, walk or ride a bike if you can.

Avoid sharing cars with people you don’t live with or are in a bubble with.

Wear a face covering if you get a taxi.
Going to shops and the chemist

You might want to continue using online delivery for your shopping or getting help from family and friends.

If you do go to the shops, go when it is not busy.

You must wear a face covering in shops unless you have permission not to.

You can still get the special supermarket delivery slots for people who are shielding until 21 June 2021.
You might still want to ask friends or family to collect medicine for you.

Or you could get help from The NHS Volunteer Responders Team who can deliver medicine and shopping to you.

- www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk
- 0808 196 3646
If you need more care and support

It important that you continue to receive the care and support you need to stay safe and well.

We are trying to make sure services stay open and are safe.

You should continue to get help from the NHS for your health conditions.

You can get some services from home, like ordering your medicine or speaking to people in video chats.

To find out more visit: www.nhs.uk/health-at-home

or download the NHS app: www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app
Urgent help

For urgent medical problems call NHS 111, or for emergencies call 999.

It is important to look after your mental health as well.

You can go to: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters to help with this

or: www.letstalkloneliness.co.uk if you are feeling lonely.

If you or someone you care for is having mental health problems, contact a health care service immediately.

You can find out how here: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/advice-for-life-situations-and-events/where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/
You can get more support from whoever provides your:

- gas and electricity. Find out how here:  

- telephone or internet. Find out how here:  
  www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/what-is-ofcom/consumer-vulnerability