



SHIELDING

Guidance for Local Authorities and Local Resilience Partnerships on support for those who are at the highest risk of severe illness from COVID-19

Version 2.0

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Purpose of this guidance

This document describes the partnership approach between local and national organisations to support those in our communities who are clinically at the highest risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19 and have been advised to isolate themselves (“shielding”) until at least the end of July. This guidance also sets out the role of local authorities in delivering that approach.

This approach builds on existing Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) arrangements and is not intended to replace them, rather to focus efforts to ensure those who are at the highest clinical risk are identified, continue to receive the services they need, and receive new support to cope with the demands of shielding.

The audience for this guide is: local authorities, LRPs and local authority support line staff who are already delivering support to vulnerable groups in their communities and anyone else who needs to understand the local authority role. Local authorities will be a key partner in this approach, working closely with clinically at risk individuals, the Scottish Government, the NHS, food industry and pharmacy partners and the voluntary and community sector to ensure the system works

This is a live document and we will issue updates, taking on board your feedback. Updates will now be made fortnightly on Fridays, and we will be moving the guidance online.

Key Contacts for SPOCs

For support with the Nata file transfer

Overview

As of 20 July 2020, 181,155 people in Scotland have been advised that their existing medical conditions put them at the highest clinical risk of severe illness from COVID-19. These medical conditions have been identified by the Chief Medical Officers across the UK.

‘Shielding’ is designed to protect these individuals by minimising all interaction between them and others to prevent them from coming into contact with the virus.

It is essential that people in these groups stringently self-isolate until at least the end of July. The First Minister announced an extension to the initial 12 week shielding period on 8 June. Letters have been sent to all those currently shielding and any new letters being sent will now include the new date.

The programme for shielding is due to pause on 31 July 2020 as long as the prevalence of infections from Covid-19 remains low. However the guidance will remain relevant for authorities should there be the need to reintroduce some of the measures used in the earlier stages of the outbreak

The support described in this guidance is designed to enable them to do this, to protect them from serious illness and take pressure off the NHS providing the most acute care. Local partners already offer a range of support to people in their communities and this should continue to be delivered and enhanced. Support should be offered to everyone who falls within this category.

Many individuals who are shielding will have a network of family, friends and others who can provide support, and individuals who are shielding should be encouraged to use them. There will be some individuals who have no local support networks and who will need support during this period of shielding. Additional support is being made available at local and national level for those who need it, and include:

- **Food supplies:** we are working with the food industry to deliver basic weekly food and household essentials directly to their doorsteps. Food supplies will cease at the end of July in line with other shielding requirements
- **Medicines:** during the outbreak Community Pharmacy Scotland supported community pharmacies’ capacity to deliver and also drew on the resources of local authorities. From August people who had been shielding should either collect medicines themselves, ask friends or family if they cannot go to the pharmacy or make contact with their local pharmacy to ask if they can provide a delivery.
- **Supermarket online priority delivery slots:** individuals who are shielding have the option of registering for access to online supermarket delivery slots. Some supermarkets are continuing with this facility until further notice for families who had required to shield

The Scottish Government is exploring how this offering can be expanded once this core support is in place.

There will be other individuals and groups, who do not have the conditions listed in the shielding guidance, who may need assistance. This guide is related only to those at the highest risk, who are shielding, and does not cover the wider group. Local authorities will have existing arrangements in place to support many people who are vulnerable and fall outwith the clinically high risk category, and will continue to have a crucial role in supporting them.

How will those in the highest risk group be contacted?

Identification of those shielding

Individuals who are in the shielding group can be identified in two ways – either centrally through information held by Public Health Scotland (PHS), or locally by GP and hospital clinicians. As of 2 April, the majority of people had been identified by PHS through existing datasets. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) began to send letters from the then Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to people in these groups on 26 March, providing advice about the steps they should take to protect themselves and offering further support.

PHS are letting GP practices and Health Boards know of the patients they identify centrally. A large number of individuals not captured in the initial PHS dataset have been identified by hospital clinicians and GPs and added to the PHS cohort. Some individuals will continue to be identified as clinical advice develops and new patients are diagnosed. The decision on whether someone is at the highest clinical risk from Covid-19 is a medical decision. People who believe they should be shielding but have not been added to the PHS list of people at highest clinical risk should be directed to their GP practice or their hospital consultant. The Shielding categories were defined by the four CMOs and will only be altered on clinical advice.

There are established routes for GPs and hospital clinicians to follow in identifying additional individuals which involve the clinicians supplying the individual's CHI number to their Health Board co-ordinating team, who then collate the CHI numbers for their area and pass this information on to PHS who add all the locally identified patients to their central lists. Some clinicians may choose to provide a copy of the generic patient letter so that the patient receives the advice of the letter sooner; this is optional; we have provided clinicians with a copy of the generic clinician-issued patient letter.

If individuals have received a shielding letter but do not feel this is appropriate they should contact their GP. GPs will discuss this with them and if it is agreed that shielding is not appropriate or in their best overall interests, GPs will send their CHI number and group to their local Health Board coordinating team, highlighting that the patient is no longer to shield. The Health Board coordinating team will update PHS that the person is no longer to shield.

All patients identified for shielding should anticipate a discussion with their GP or hospital clinician, regardless of whether they were centrally or locally identified.

In some areas, NHS colleagues can add contact details from their own records of individuals on the shielding list. Neither PHS nor the Scottish Government holds telephone numbers centrally. To reduce the burden on clinicians, the Scottish Government asked them to only provide PHS with the CHI number and PHS get the address and name from the central CHI database (which does not hold phone numbers) unless the Health Board also provides an address to PHS.

PHS normally sends local authorities the updated list of individuals who are shielding on a Tuesday. This list also identifies people that have died (D) and people that have been removed from the list (R). There is a process in place for removals – clinician must have a conversation with the patient prior to removing people from the shielding list. First class post isn't guaranteed next day delivery and letters may take up to 3 days to be delivered (longer in remote areas). We rely on the addresses that the person has provided to the NHS and on the Royal Mail for delivery. As the number of new letters which need to be issued has reduced significantly, they are now sent on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Second Letter from the Deputy First Minister

The Scottish Government (acting through NSS) sent individuals a second letter w/c 6 April from the DFM. This referred to the local assistance centre numbers, which were not all in place when the first CMO letters were issued, and signpost to other services.

In the letter, individuals are asked to register with the SMS service, or contact their local assistance centre using the telephone numbers included in the letter, even if they have no need. This is so we can ensure individuals are okay, even if they have not asked for support. The intention is to make sure people have the number of their local assistance centre, and to ask people to register with the SMS service so they can access priority supermarket delivery slots. They can sign up at any time but we would encourage them to sign up initially even if they do not need any assistance at this time.

If an individual lives in a different local authority area than their GP practice, they will be on the shielding list for the local authority area in which they live.

Chief Medical Officer letter to clinically high risk individuals from 8 June

Further to the extension of shielding to the end of July, from 8 June onwards, a new letter is now issued to people that are newly identified for shielding (please see Annex E).

Update Letter from the Chief Medical Officer on 8 June

On 8 June, all individuals who are currently shielding were sent an update from the Interim CMO – please see Annex H. This letter was shared with the local authority SPOCs on 7 June, along with a Q&A for local authority call handlers (please see Annex I). The latter advised that those shielding should continue to do so until at least the end of July and that all existing support (e.g. the SMS Service and grocery offers) will continue during this time. The letter advised that, from 18 June, we will change our advice so that people can choose to go outdoors for exercise, as long as:

- they do not live in a residential care or nursing home – if they do, our advice will remain to stay at home and not go outdoors for exercise
- coronavirus (COVID-19) infection rates in Scotland are low enough

We will announce whether rates are low enough in the Scottish Government's daily coronavirus briefing on 18 June, through our SMS Shielding Service and on Scottish Government websites. We will let local authorities and RRP's know through the usual channels.

Once confirmed, our advice will be that there is no limit on the amount of times they can go out to exercise, or how long they can stay out for. Our advice will continue to avoid going into other buildings, to meet up with people from outwith their household either inside or outside and to strictly maintain physical distancing.

We have also updated our [shielding guidance on gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/shielding-guidance) to include more detailed guidance on how to exercise safely outdoors.

Update Letter from the Chief Medical Officer on 9 July

On 9 July all individuals who are currently shielding were sent an update from the Interim CMO – please see Annex J This letter was shared with the local authority SPOCs. The letter provides changes to current shielding advice such as:

- stop physically distancing from the people the patient live with
- go indoors to use a toilet in someone else's house, when visiting them outdoors
- meet up to 8 people outdoors, from 2 other households, in a single day – it does not need to be the same 2 households every day
- travel further than 5 miles from the house
- book self-catering accommodation (without shared facilities) or travel to a second home
- for those living alone or only live with children who are under 18, people can agree to form an extended household with one other household.
- as long as the infection rate in Scotland carries on falling, that we'll be able to advise you to stop shielding from 1 August

As long as infection rates remain low, we expect to confirm further changes to shielding later in July.

Update Letter from Chief Medical Officer on 24 July

On 24 July all individuals who are currently shielding were sent an update from the interim CMO – at Annex K. This letter explained that people could stop shielding from 1 August.

This is because the rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland is currently very low. To stay safe, you should follow advice given to everyone in Scotland about physical distancing and regular handwashing, but you do not need to carry on shielding. The letter also outlined the support that the shielding cohort could still receive:

- still get updates from our SMS Shielding Service – you'll soon also be able to get regular updates on the COVID-19 infection rate in your local area through the SMS Shielding Service
- be able to access help and support online – this includes up-to-date health guidance about a range of specific conditions, help in understanding what sort of activities are safer than others, and checklists on how to protect yourself in daily life
- be kept on a list of shielding people, so we can contact and update you directly if our advice changes, such as if there's an increase in infection rates (you can request to be removed from the list by asking your GP or hospital clinician)
- be able to access guidance on returning to work or school
- be able to contact our helpline on [REDACTED], if you need help from your local council

Undelivered letters

Undelivered letters are returned to CfH Docmail (the company which prints and posts the letters). The standard process is that NSS then writes to the person's registered GP practice stating that they wrote to one of their registered patients but that the letter was returned as undelivered. The GP practice will contact the patient to update his or her address. NSS reports that, as of 16 April, one letter has been returned as undelivered. This is more likely to be a consequence of Royal Mail prioritising collection and delivery of mail over undelivered mail at this time.

PHS will run the master list of patients against National Records of Scotland's death register weekly. That will allow PHS to update local authorities and NHS National Education for Scotland (NES) of any individuals who have died.

Removal from the shielding list

Individuals may be removed from the shielding list for a number of reasons including misidentification, a change in their clinical status, their own request to be removed or due to the death of the individual. As at 29 June, for any individuals who have been removed and have active grocery box requests, they will continue to receive these weekly for four weeks from the date they were removed, but no further than the 31 July.

Information for those shielding

Full guidance on shielding is available on NHS Inform [here](#), and guidance on the support offer can be found [here](#).

Role of local authorities

Local authorities should continue to offer services currently on offer, including grocery supply arrangements, and enhance their offering in order to respond to the needs of people who are shielding. There is nothing to stop local authorities from going beyond the services set out here to and we would encourage them to support people in whatever way necessary.

Contacting those who are shielding

PHS has provided local authorities with the names, CHI numbers and addresses of the people in their area who are in the shielding group. To ensure no one is left behind and is living without support, local authorities are expected to proactively telephone the individuals who are shielding in their areas. Where direct data does not include phone numbers this can be resolved by local authorities by cross-referencing the data from NSS with data from various Council systems including those used by Health and Social Care, or with NHS Board data to obtain telephone phone numbers.

There may also be people for whom there is no phone number in central records, and who do not register with the SMS Shielding Service. NSS sent individuals a second letter w/c 6 April which gave them the shielding phone numbers for their local authority areas. In these cases local authorities will need to use local intelligence to make contact.

Local authorities should develop or adapt customer relations management systems in order to track interactions with citizens, and allow scrutiny of these through internal audit.

Local Authority Support Lines

Local authorities should be ready to take calls from people who are shielding, update their contact details, record their phone numbers, assess their needs, for food and medication supplies at the least, and for other needs in line with whatever enhanced local services are available.

Every local authority has now set up a shielding support phone line. A full list of local authority shielding contact details were appended to the second letter and are available on gov.scot.

For some vulnerable people, for example children or those with communication difficulties, an unpaid carer or family member will need to get in touch on their behalf.

A National Helpline has been set up to provide essential assistance to those who do not have a network of support, or who are at increased risk if they contract COVID-19. The service will offer help to those who do not have family or existing community support and cannot get online and who are over 70, disabled people, receive the support of mental health services, are pregnant or receive a flu jab for health reasons. Any of those in the shielding category who are not yet receiving assistance can access support via this new helpline.

Pharmacy

Local authorities should make contact with their local community pharmacy if they have not already done so to develop ways of supporting deliveries as outlined above. As businesses and local authorities return to normal business it is likely that there would not be resource to support through local authority assistance. Local pharmacies may continue with a delivery service. An individual who had to previously shield may be likely to make their own arrangements or revert to collection their medicines as prior to March 2020.

Data SPOCs

Local authorities should identify a single point of contact for receiving data.

Performance Reporting

A process is in place to collect weekly data on performance on the activities described in this guidance and to create standard and proportionate reporting for local authorities. This will ensure consistency in approach and enable reporting nationally on progress and issues. Local authorities can use this for local briefing as well.

The progress on the number of shielded individuals contacted will be a main component of the data capture to provide all agencies with assurance there has been a satisfactory level of engagement and that there is both; an understanding by the individual of shielding, and how to access support if required. This data will include shielding individuals who have contacted the LA themselves.

The SMS Shielding Service

Even when shielding is paused, we'll send key updates through the SMS Shielding Service. The service will carry on for as long as it's needed. As will the national helpline. If these services are no longer needed, we'll give people plenty of notice that they are ending.

Invitation to join the service

The shielding letters include an invitation to sign up to a national SMS Shielding Service. This is only available to those in the shielding group. To register, people text their CHI number to the Service. If their CHI number does not match the eligible cohort, they will receive a message explaining this and asking them to try again. The same occurs if people do not provide a CHI number. The message also suggests that they call their local authority if they need to speak to someone. Currently over half of the people in the shielding group are registered with the Service.

Automated service

It is important to note that the SMS Shielding Service is automated. If people have urgent support needs, or bespoke requests, they will need to contact their local authority. The Service only recognises set code words that it instructs people to use for specific purposes. For example, the code word "1BOX" to order one box of weekly groceries.

If people text other information or questions to the SMS number, they receive an automatic message referring them to their local authority support line. It is also important to be aware that the Service can only receive text messages. If people try to call the number they will hear a "number not recognised" message.

Individuals can check whether they are registered with the Service by texting the number any message (for example, the word "test"). If successfully registered, they will receive an automated response confirming their status with the SMS Shielding Service. For example, if they have registered and have not yet requested grocery deliveries they will get a reply such as:

Thank you for your text. You are signed up for the SMS shielding service. We do not have you on the list for delivery of basic groceries. If you now need groceries delivered to your home, reply 1BOX (no space).

If they are not registered, they will receive a message explaining that to register they need to text their CHI number.

Troubleshooting for the SMS Shielding Service

Please see [Annex F](#) for information on troubleshooting for the SMS Shielding Service.

Weekly food and essential supplies boxes

People who have been asked to shield can order free weekly deliveries of food and essential supplies. These boxes are intended for those who do not have access to support from family, friends or others.

Local food responses to urgent need will already be in place, and these should continue. Local authorities are encouraged to augment the food boxes locally. For example, with chilled products, eggs and dairy, or with food that supports particular diets. Food Standards Scotland have produced [further guidance](#) for supplementing the boxes.

Each grocery box now includes a leaflet that tells people that the boxes will stop on 31 July if shielding is paused on 1 August.

Contents of the box

The food package will comprise a box of household essentials. It is designed to be a week's worth of food and basic supplies such as shower gel and toilet tissue. As far as possible, it is universally suitable and will not cater to all special dietary or religious requirements. The packages will include tinned meat and tinned tuna and will otherwise be vegetarian. People are advised to check the contents of the package carefully. If they have particular dietary requirements, they are advised not to eat anything they are unsure about. For example, foods which may cause them to have an allergic reaction. This package provides sufficient food and household essentials for one week and meets nutritional requirements. If people are not able to eat some of the food supplied and feel that the remaining contents of the package are not enough to feed them for one week, they are advised to contact their local authority for support.

For further information on the box contents & dimensions see [Annex D](#), We have also provided the calling card text and updated leaflet to be included in the box.

How to order the food and essential supplies boxes

From 17 July, individuals are not able to register for the grocery box service.

Ordering through the SMS Shielding Service

People can use the **SMS Shielding Service** to access food support, if they are already registered for boxes. They can change their order by texting "**1BOX**" or "**2BOX**"

depending on the quantity they need. The Service tells people to contact their local authority if they need food urgently.

NES compiles the list of everyone who has requested a weekly delivery. Every morning, the full list is sent to Brakes and Bidfood for processing and delivery.

Local authorities are now receiving data from NES every weekday. This data includes details of the support that people have requested directly through the SMS Shielding Service. This gives a fuller picture of the support people in your area are receiving. This should help with your planning and prioritisation. These reports are loaded to your SendSafely workspace automatically. Please see the updated technical guidance circulated on 3 July for more information.

Ordering through local authority support lines

From 17 July, individuals cannot register for the grocery box service through their local authority.

Grocery packs can be delivered to an address that is different to the one on an individual's shielding letter. To arrange this, they need to contact their local authority. They cannot do this through the SMS Shielding Service. The local authority can make the change for the individual using the daily data transfer to NES.

If individuals need to order period products, they should contact their local authority. When assisting individuals over the phone, the local authority should ask individuals if the individual or people in their households will need these products.

Stopping weekly grocery boxes

People can stop receiving the week grocery boxes by texting "STOPBOX" to the SMS Shielding Service. From 17 July, they will not then be able to re-register for groceries.

Local authorities can also cancel the boxes using the file transfer system. To do this, record "0" (zero) in the "Quantity" column for that person in the file submitted to NES. This will cancel any order the person has requested. It achieves the same thing as the individual texting "STOPBOX".

The automated system will now act on the latest instruction. This is regardless of whether this comes from the SMS Service or via local authorities. From 17 July, the local authority cannot now register an individual for boxes.

If an individual has passed away, our current policy is that household will continue to receive boxes for 4 weeks afterwards. After this point, they should stop. Scottish Government and local authorities can request that the boxes be stopped immediately if appropriate.

Delivery of the food boxes

Scottish Government has contracted Brakes and Bidfood to deliver these packages to people's doors. This includes remote areas, sometimes through sub-contractors. Deliveries will be grouped by postcode. Deliveries will be made once a week normally on the same day every week. Delivery times are between 6am - 10pm.

A person's first delivery should arrive within eight days of them requesting it through the SMS Shielding Service. It could be up to nine days if they request it through their local authority. The boxes will then arrive weekly thereafter. Any longer than this suggests there has been a problem with registration or the delivery of the box.

The delivery will be contact free to protect individuals, and so the box will be placed on the doorstep. If individuals are not able to bring the box into their house themselves, they are advised to contact the local authority for help. The local authority should ensure that they keep the contact details of each individual that has requested support. The local authority can then make contact with each individual before their delivery to ask them to get in touch when their delivery has arrived. Someone from the local authority can then go to help bring the boxes being taken into the property. This may also include repacking the boxes into smaller quantities to make them more manageable. Another option is to align delivery with an individual's scheduled care provision. When local authorities are ordering on behalf of individuals, they should ask them if they will be able to take the box inside and unpack it.

Missed or incorrect deliveries

When an individual contacts their local authority about a missing delivery, the call handlers should:

- Record the name of the individual
- Record the address of the individual
- Check the individual is in the shielding group using the list from PHS
- Check the individual has registered for a grocery box using the data shared by NES
- When the individual registered for the grocery box using the data shared by NES

Before reporting the difficulty to Brakes & Bidfood (using the contact details in the key contacts box) the local authority should confirm that these details are correct. They should also consider whether a known issue has already been raised (to avoid duplicate queries). If the person registered within the last 7 days then they may not be included in the most recent grocery delivery. The local authority should ensure that they provide food supplies urgently if required.

Anyone who contacts Brakes & Bidfood either about not being able to register after 17 July or about not getting support after 31 July will be directed to the helpline. We have provided the LAs with the following scripts for handling queries that come their way:

For those who can't register after 17 July

- Deadline has been set because the grocery box service is coming to a close.
- People who are shielding will be able to visit shops in person from 24 July. (They must wear a face covering when visiting shops, unless they have a health condition or disability that makes wearing one hard.)

- The option to register for priority access to supermarket deliveries is open until 31 July. This enables people to buy food that best suits their dietary needs and preferences.
- Other options for accessing food include asking friends and family to shop for groceries or using local community groups (LA can provide details).
- LA is there to support those needing urgent assistance with food or other groceries.

For those with queries after 31 July

- The grocery box service has closed because shielding has been paused.
- People who are shielding are able to visit shops in person. (They must wear a face covering when visiting shops, unless they have a health condition or disability that makes wearing one hard.)
- LA is there to support those needing urgent assistance with food or other groceries, in the same way as for others who have not been shielding.

Bulk distribution

Bulk distribution to local authority hubs is not now available.

Priority access to online supermarket delivery slots

Supermarket partners and coverage

Supermarket partners who will offer priority access to online delivery slots for individuals who are shielding are Asda, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Tesco, Iceland and Waitrose.

Supermarkets have been actively expanding capacity and reviewing processes to service as many customers as possible. Sainsbury's and Morrisons currently offer their priority slots one week in advance so at times it may appear there is no availability. This is not the case and the advice is to keep checking.

Supermarket coverage	
Central belt, Stirling, Perthshire, Dundee and the North	Our supermarket partners have indicated that they have either good or very good coverage.
Scottish Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sainsbury's has a limited coverage • Asda do not deliver to Orkney or Shetland • Tesco have a couple of different models in operation. There exists a handful of local arrangements to take product to Islands of which some are independently arranged with the local community.

Getting priority access to supermarket delivery slots

The process to request priority access to online supermarket delivery slots is detailed below:

- Once signed up for the SMS Shielding Service, individuals are asked if they would like to request priority access and instructed to text 1SHOP. The first text inviting people to opt-in to this service was sent on 9 April. It is now included in the initial welcome text.
- NES (who run the SMS Shielding Service) collates daily updated lists of everyone who has opted in to supermarket delivery slots. NES then sends our partner supermarkets the details of everyone who has opted in.
- Once supermarkets have received this data, they will email any individuals who have existing customer accounts with them. Please note, it is the information of the individual who is shielding that is shared with the supermarket.
- The process takes a little longer for people who have not previously used online supermarket deliveries before, as they will need to be set up as new customers with a supermarket that can deliver to their area. These people will receive a further text through the SMS Shielding Service explaining how they can register with a supermarket.
- On 17 April, everyone who had already requested supermarket deliveries was sent the following message:

You told us you were interested in the priority shopping service. Our supermarket and retail partners will offer you priority delivery slots. These will be offered as soon as they become available. They may already have contacted you about this service. If you have not used an online delivery service before you will need to be set up as a new customer. We will contact you by SMS early next week to tell you how to do this. This message is for information only. You should not respond.

For more urgent groceries delivery, please phone your local council or [REDACTED].

- Further SMS messages were sent (from 22 April) to new customers to advise how they can register with a supermarket that can deliver to them. This is an ongoing process:
 - the SMS Shielding Service continually sends texts inviting newly identified individuals in the shielding group to opt-in
 - the data of those who have opted in is shared with supermarkets
 - supermarkets contact current customers
 - the SMS Shielding Service texts further instructions to those who are not registered with any supermarkets
- A parent, guardian or carer of someone who is shielding can use their own mobile number to register. Thereafter, the parent or carer can request priority

access to supermarket delivery slots through the SMS Shielding Service or by contacting their local authority or by phoning the National Helpline.

- People without a mobile phone can also request supermarket priority slots by contacting their local authority. Please see the technical guidance issued to Data Leads on 12 June for how to capture this in the data return to NES.
- If an individual who is shielding is in urgent need of assistance for food we recommend that they take advantage of the free weekly grocery pack provided by Brakes and Bidfood.

Details of what priority access looks like

Please note – accurate at time of writing 12 June but will be subject to change.

Supermarket (FAQ links)	Estimated Delivery*	Specific information
<u>Tesco</u>	Up to 1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will be emailed to advise they have priority access to delivery slots. • They then need to enter the website. • Will see 'Priority slots' button on the 'book a slot' page under 'choose a slot type'. Will see a number of 8 hour slots (only priority customers see this as they are ring-fenced for them). • If they only see a button that says 'flexi slots' then their account does not have priority access. • Nothing visible on website to indicate shielded. • Tesco customers not on the shielding list can ask to be added by calling [REDACTED]
<u>Asda</u>	Up to 3 weeks for new shielded customer, less for existing customers who can book re-occurring weekly slots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will be advised they have a 'pass' by email. • They then need to enter website. • Will see available slots up to 21 days in advance (non-shielded will only see 14).
<u>Sainsbury's</u>	Up to 1 week for new shielded customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will get a flag put on their account to allow priority access. • Customer needs to be known via the groceries side of the business (e.g. will not link through an Argos account). • Also, if there is no email linked to a Nectar card then they will not get picked up.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will have a 4 day advantage on viewing slots (i.e. a 4 day head start before released to all other customers). • Nothing visible on website to indicate shielded. • Can only book a 1 slot every 7 days, however can book a slot a week later with high chance of securing (can amend order up to a day before delivery).
Morrisons	2 – 3 days for existing shielded customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will automatically get onto website (non-shielded have a queuing system). If delays getting onto website – likely a website issue. • Will see available slots up to 21 days in advance (non-shielded will only see 15). • Nothing visible on website to indicate shielded.
<u>Waitrose</u>	5 – 6 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will see slots up to 14 days in advance (non-shielded will only see 7). • Nothing visible on website to indicate shielded.
<u>Iceland</u>	2 – 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will get a marker placed on their account. • New customers will be emailed a special code. • Should see a personalised banner noting shielded access on a Thursday between 0900 – 1000. Allows first access to slots. • Helplines currently closed direct enquiries to https://www.iceland.co.uk/customer-support/contact-us

*Subject to location/geography.

Troubleshooting for individuals trying to register

Using the data that NES share back to local authorities, when dealing with enquiries about priority access to delivery slots you can check the data that the supermarkets “accepted” the data.

If the individual has successfully registered as a priority customer and there are no available slots, then they are advised to keep trying as the supermarkets continue to increase capacity and make more slots available.

For individuals who were previous online customers:

- The supermarket will contact the individual (most likely via email). We are unable to confirm if a supermarket has contacted someone at this stage.

- **Ask the individual to check junk, spam or promotional folders as well as any old email addresses the supermarket may have.**
- **Ask them to make sure that the details they are using match the details in the letter they have received. The details need to be of the person shielding.**
- If they do not have priority access when they log into their account and have not heard from a supermarket within a reasonable timeframe then we can go to the supermarket on a case by case basis.

For individuals who have not used online shopping before:

- They will receive a text(s) from the SMS Shielding Service explaining how to register with a supermarket who is able to deliver to them.
- We are unable to confirm if a supermarket has contacted someone after they have followed these instructions.
- **Ask the individual if they have received and followed the registration instructions. They need to ensure that the details they are registering with match those on their shielding letter.**
 - Asda – Register for an account at www.asda.com/register and Asda will be in touch within 3 days.
 - Iceland – Register for an account at www.iceland.co.uk and Iceland will be in touch.
 - Morrisons – Register online at www.morrisons.com and they will identify you as a priority customer.
 - Tesco – Fill in your details at <https://secure.tesco.com/account/en-GB/register> and Tesco will email you within 2 working days.
 - Sainsbury's – Text PRIORITY to 60260.
 - Waitrose – Set up the service at www.waitrose.com/ecom/registration
- If they do not have access after following the above and have not heard from a supermarket within a reasonable timeframe then we can go to the supermarket on a case by case basis.

For individuals who have not been “accepted”:

- They are most likely in an area to which the supermarkets are unable to deliver. **Their information will be passed onto the LA for additional support.**

Vitamin D guidance

Food Standards Scotland have updated their [advice on vitamin D](#) with specific regard to the impact of lockdown. The advice is that everyone in Scotland should consider taking a daily 10 microgram supplement of vitamin D. This is help keep your bones and muscle healthy.

In general, vitamin D is available at most supermarkets, health shops and pharmacies.

In the meantime, we are raising awareness about this advice with those in the shielding group. An SMS message will soon be broadcast to everyone who is signed up with the Service. We are also updating our online advice and will start to include it in the letters from the CMO.

Community pharmacy

It is essential that people in these groups continue to receive the supply of medication they need. Some people will already have arrangements through friends or family, and some community pharmacies will be able to deliver. However, staff absences or high demand resulting from Covid-19 may impact this service.

Local authorities should continue to work with local community pharmacies to support them to ensure people can access their medications without putting themselves at risk. This process is outlined at [Annex G](#).

Individuals should contact their local assistance centre if they need support in getting medication delivered. It is, however, acknowledged that local authorities do not have the capacity to resource this on a large scale. Local authorities need to be the last resort for individual delivery of prescriptions and this will be reflected in the script sent by SMS. The first time this happened was Tuesday 21 April. The text stated: "If you need your prescription medicines collected from a pharmacy but have nobody who can do this for you, please phone [REDACTED]. This will connect you to your local authority's shielding support line, so that you can arrange to have your prescription delivered to you."

The system is based on patients consenting for the local authority to support them by collecting their medication on their behalf. The local authority must acquire that consent – through the call centre, for example. The local authority should also identify the pharmacy from which the patient normally collects their prescriptions.

Currently, drivers need to be Disclosure Scotland checked and all deliveries must be made by those with basic disclosure. At the present time, around 94% of Disclosure Scotland applications are being processed within 24 hours. Local authorities are advised to ensure those that may be delivering to apply as soon as possible to avoid future issues or to utilise third sectors who have processes already established.

When the driver arrives at the community pharmacy to collect the deliveries the pharmacy door may be locked and/ or there may be a queue. They should show a laminated card showing their role to the pharmacy and or the members of the public at the front of the queue to gain access to the pharmacy without waiting in the queue.

The driver should show the pharmacy staff their photo identification. The staff will take a note of your name and will record the names and addresses of the patients whose medication you are collecting for delivery.

If the driver is aware that a patient has the virus they should leave their delivery to the end of their route. When they arrive at the patients address, they should go to their door or the area they have been instructed to leave the medicine by the patient. **They**

should not open the bag of medicines and not post the medicine through the letterbox. The driver should ring the doorbell or knock on the door to alert the patient that they are delivering their medication.

The driver should leave the medication in the designated area and move away to a safe distance from the door (at least 2 meters) but where they still have sight of the medication, and wait for a response. If there is no response return to where you left the medicines, ring the doorbell / knock the door and move away to a safe distance and wait for a response.

If there is no response, retrieve the medicines and return them for secure storage to either the Community Pharmacy or the Resilience Hub in line with the local policy. Inform the Resilience Hub Team that the delivery was unsuccessful immediately, before moving on to the next delivery. It is critical that the Resilience Hub Team follow up directly with the patient as soon as is possible to check on their safety. Shielding patients should be at home at all times, so it is a real possibility that where they do not respond they have taken seriously unwell.

Unpaid carers/family members

Whether or not they need to take up the offer outlined in this document, the family members/unpaid carers of people who are shielding will themselves be under increased pressure at this time. It is therefore good practice for local authorities to agree protocols with their local carers' centres for referring family members/unpaid carers to them for practical advice and emotional support with their caring role.

Face Coverings and PPE

By law a face covering must be worn by all people in the following places, except where an exemption applies (as defined in the [legislation](#)), or where there is a 'reasonable excuse' not to wear a face covering.

- on public transport and public transport premises such as railway and bus stations and airports.
- any premises open to members of the public and used for the retail sale or hire of goods or services. This now includes: shops; takeaway restaurants; estate agents; and beauty parlours. This does not extend to hospitality premises such as sit-in cafes and restaurants
- aquariums, indoor zoos or visitor farms, and any other indoor tourist, heritage or cultural site
- banks, building societies and credit unions
- cinemas
- community centres

- crematoriums and funeral directors premises
- libraries and public reading rooms
- museums and galleries
- places of worship
- post offices
- storage and distribution facilities, including collection and drop off points

Although it is not mandatory it is recommended that people wear a face covering in care homes, hospitals, GP practices, public toilets and busy public places where 2 metres cannot be maintained.

A face covering can be any covering of the mouth and nose that is made of cloth or other textiles and through which you can breathe.

Face covering exemptions

Some people are not required to wear a face covering.

These include:

- children under 5 years of age
- police constables or workers such as paramedics acting in the course of their duty
- staff such as drivers or checkout assistants who are physically separated, by means of, for example, screens, from passengers or customers
- shop workers if they maintain a 2 metre distance from customers or members of the public

You may also have a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering if, for example:

- you have a health condition or you are disabled and a face covering would be inappropriate because it would cause difficulty, pain or severe distress or anxiety or because you cannot apply a covering and wear it in the proper manner safely and consistently.
- Individual discretion should be applied in considering the use of face coverings for other children including, for example, children with breathing difficulties and disabled children who would struggle to wear a face covering
- you need to eat or drink
- you are taking medication
- you are communicating with someone else who relies on lip reading
- a relevant person, such as a police officer, asks you to remove your face covering

At present you are not required to carry proof that you are exempt from wearing a face covering. If you are to inform public transport or retail staff that you are exempt from wearing a face covering then we would expect them to accept this.

The role of Local Resilience Partnerships

LRPs play a critical role in the ongoing response to COVID-19 over a wide range of aspects. They provide a forum to discuss, address and escalate local issues to the Scottish Government. While the Scottish Government and local authorities will act as the key deliverer of this offer to clinically high risk individuals, it is important that LRPs maintain situational awareness of how this group is being supported. LRPs should also continue to act as a strategic forum for local partners to develop an overall view of demand and supply of support in each area and to identify and address any issues arising from how the system is operating locally.

The LRPs will provide a forum for local authorities and other local partners to identify any gaps or issues in how the system is operating locally, and to help to coordinate the deployment of local community and voluntary services and any LRP assets as required to address these. Where possible, we would encourage the use of existing tested structures which allow for the sharing of resources.

LRPs and local authorities have well established structures in place to work with partners.

Governance and escalation structure for joint working between SG and LRPs on Shielding

Best practice should be fed up through LRPs to the Local Authority Resilience Group Scotland (LARGS) and the Shielding Contact Group – which will include Scottish Government policy officials, Scottish Government resilience, Police Scotland, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), SOLACE and local resilience coordinators – please see [Annex A](#) for a visual representation of these communication flows.

Additional military planners support

Military planners are embedded at all levels from LRP, Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP) and Scottish Government Resilience Rooms (SGoRR) to assist with the planning tasks and identification of any capability gaps. Sufficient military personnel are at readiness to meet a range of tasks should a Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) task be identified, supported and authorised. No requests have yet been received.

Engagement with the voluntary/local partners

Local authorities and LRPs, the voluntary sectors and the third sector interfaces are very well placed to identify and engage with local volunteers (individuals and groups) and should continue to use those channels. Arrangements are developing for individual volunteers registering their support on the national portal to be identified to local authorities.

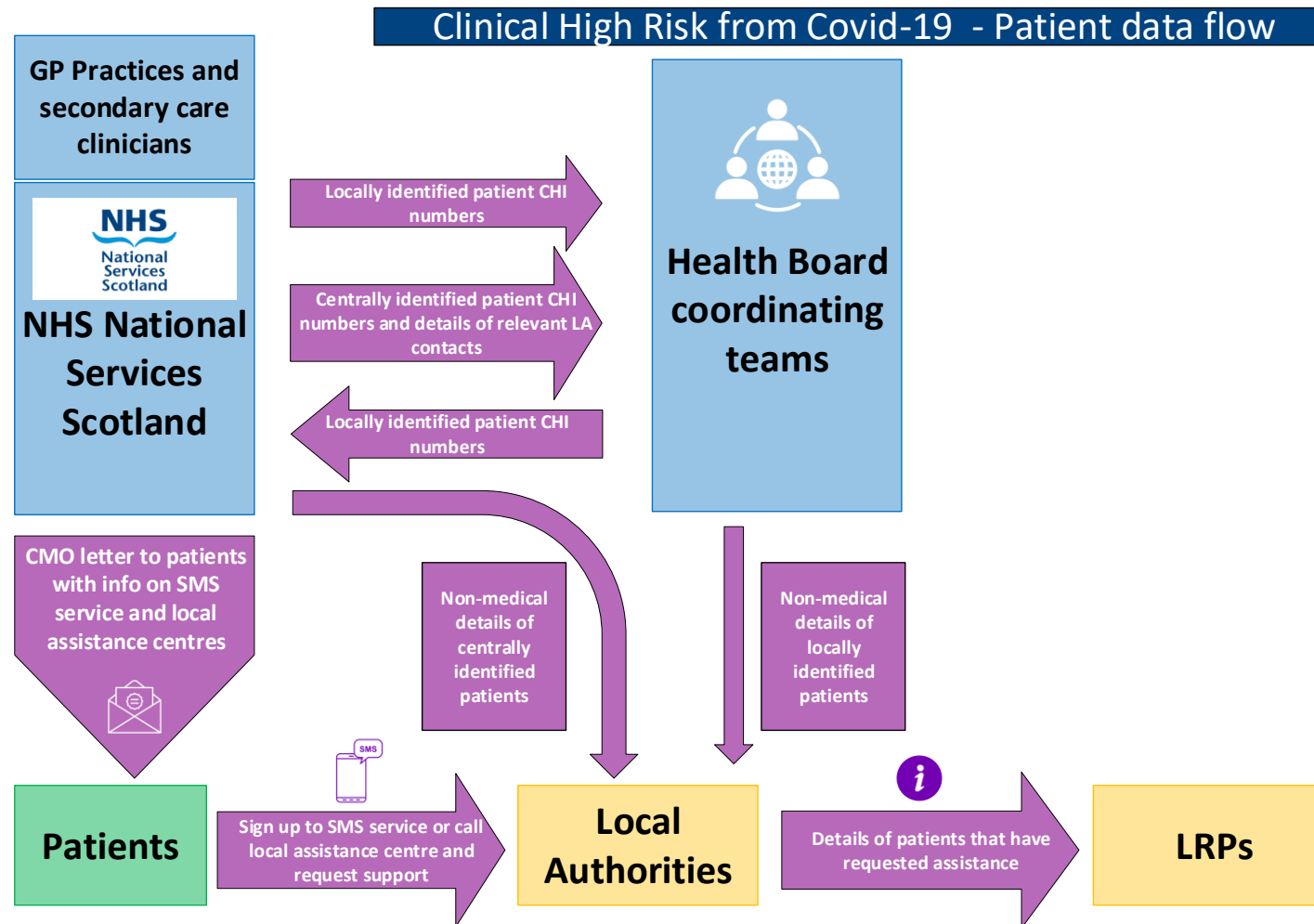
Data Sharing

The Information Commissioner has stressed the importance of organisations being able to work together and to communicate directly with people when dealing with a health emergency such as COVID-19 and that data protection law will not stop this happening. Advice from the Information Commissioner's guidance can be found here: <http://newsletter.ico.org.uk/q/1m6bUbZO6Xgt3WRBKaPb/wv>

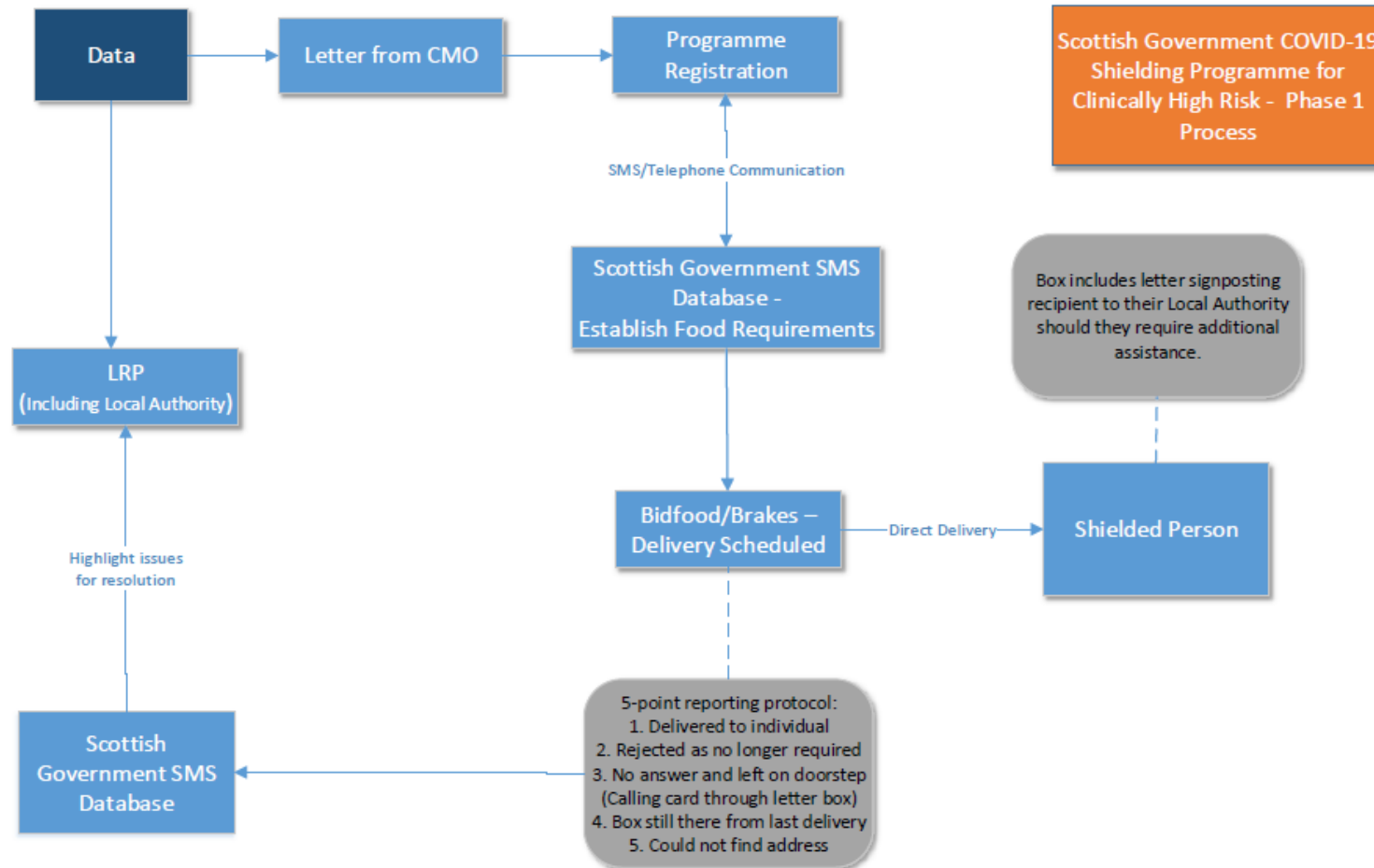
Version	Date	Signed off by
1.0	27 March 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.1	3 April 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.2	9 April 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.3	17 April 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.4	24 April 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.5	1 May 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.6	15 May 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.7	29 May 2020	Orlando Heijmer-Mason
1.8	19 June 2020	Deanna Francis
1.9	2 July 2020	Deanna Francis
2.0	25 July 2020	Deanna Francis

Annex A - Process maps

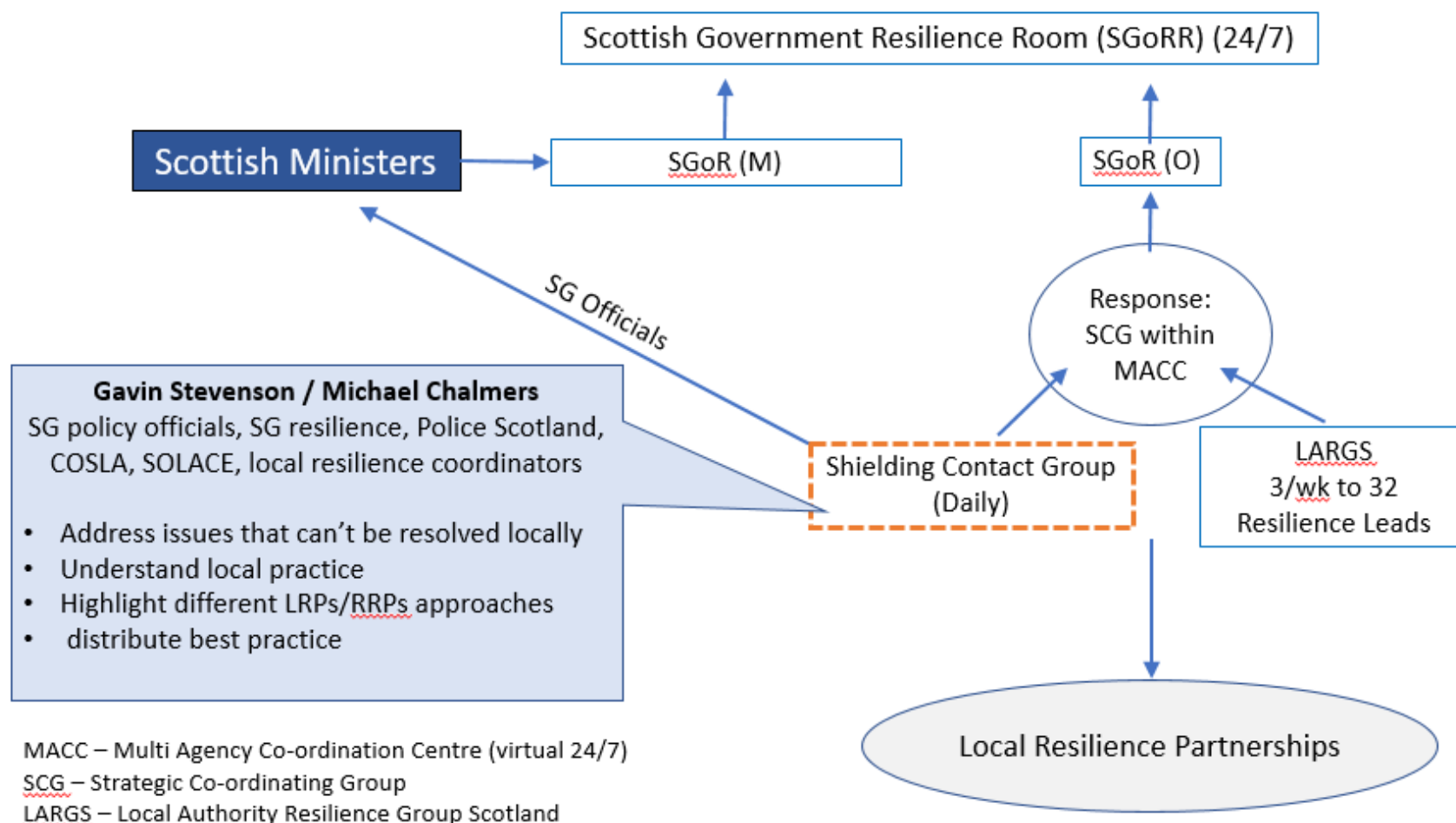
The process map below shows how data will flow between health partners, patients and the local authorities. It does not yet show in detail the transfer of data needed to place orders with the wholesalers.



High level process map



Links between LRPs & Scottish Government



Annex B - A suggested script for local authority support line staff

The below is intended as a guide to help local call handlers to get the necessary information and record it in the correct format to send to NES for processing.

- See [Annex G](#) for answers to commonly raised issues when trying to register with the SMS Shielding Service.
- See separate updated technical guidance issued on **3 July** 2020 on how to send the collected information to NES via SendSafely.

Suggested script	Recording data
<p>1. Ask for the name of the person who is shielding.</p> <p>Remember that for some people, for example children, an unpaid carer or family member may be making the call on their behalf. It is the name and CHI number of the person who is shielding that should be recorded.</p>	<p>Enter full name in the Name column e.g. Jean Scott</p>
<p>2. Confirm the person is eligible by checking their CHI number against the PHS shielding cohort data.</p> <p>If the person is not on this list, they will not be recognised by the NES system.</p>	<p>Enter 10-digit number in the CHI column e.g. 0101402334</p>
<p>3. Ask if they need a weekly grocery box delivered to them and if so, how many.</p> <p>Explain that a box is designed to be enough for one person for one week. People should order one box (if they live alone) or two boxes (if they need to feed a larger household). Exceptionally, a local authority may decide it is appropriate to order a larger number of boxes, given their household's circumstances (for example, if a person who is shielding needs to feed several dependents).</p>	<p>Enter the number of boxes required in the Quantity column e.g. 1</p>
<p>4. Check that they have not already requested a grocery box through the SMS Shielding Service. If they have – and have received a confirmation text – explain that they do not need to order through the local authority as well.</p>	<p>Leave the Quantity column blank if they do not require grocery boxes.</p>
<p>5. Check whether the person needs the grocery box to be delivered to an address that is different from the address on their CMO letter. If so, record the desired delivery address, including postcode. Nothing needs to be recorded if the grocery box is being delivered to the address on the person's CMO letter.</p>	<p>Input the new address into the AltAddress column and the new postcode to the AltPostcode column.</p> <p>Check these are correct and in the correct format: e.g. 1 High Street. Falkirk e.g. FK19 4EH</p>
<p>6. Ask for a contact number, in case the delivery staff need to contact them. If the person provides a mobile number, explain that they will be registered with the SMS Shielding Service and automatically receive the latest information and support offers for people who are shielding.</p>	<p>Input a mobile number to the PhoneNumber column to register on the SMS Shielding Service e.g. 44771 334 2344</p>

Suggested script	Recording data
Explain that they can also use the SMS Shielding Service to cancel their grocery boxes, or place new orders.	Input a landline or mobile number to the AltNumber column as a contact for delivery only e.g. 44131 234 2342
<p>7. Explain that the first box could take up to seven days to arrive from when our grocery partners receive the order. This means it could take up to nine days to arrive from now.</p> <p>Based on Brakes and Bidfood's delivery schedule, you may be able to let the person know what day of the week boxes are normally delivered in their area.</p>	
8. Explain that, after the first delivery, they will receive their grocery box order every week until they stop the service.	Input 0 to the Quantity column if they wish to cancel their boxes.
9. Ask if they need support bringing the boxes inside.	If required, local processes should be in place to enable this additional support to happen.
10. Ask if they have additional dietary requirements.	
11. Ask if they need period products delivered to them.	
12. Ask if they need any prescriptions delivered to them.	
<p>13. Ask if the person would like their details to be passed to the supermarkets, so that they can be given access to priority supermarket delivery slots.</p> <p>Explain they will receive a text detailing how to register with a supermarket who is able to deliver to them (<u>see above guidance in the Supermarket section</u>).</p> <p>If the person is already registered with a supermarket, they will contact them, possibly via email. If not, they will need to use the SMS Shielding Service to register with a supermarket that is able to deliver to their address.</p> <p>If people are registering for priority slots without a mobile and they are not already an online shopping customer then there may be a considerable delay before they hear anything. Please advise the individual to sign up with one or more supermarkets online to make this process quicker. This is a short-term solution until the matching process is shortened.</p>	<p>Input Y to the Supermarket column if they wish to opt in.</p> <p>Leave blank if they do not.</p>

Annex C - Pharmacy SOPs from Community Pharmacy Scotland

- The service is to cover patients in the shielding group only. We continue to encourage the use of existing social networks i.e. family/friends/neighbours to reduce demand to those who really need it.
- The system is based on patient consent agreeing to be part of the collection service.
- Once the prescription is collected, the responsibility for handling the prescription from that point onwards to the patient rests with the local authority/HSCP.
- The local authority will need to identify from patients opting in to the service the pharmacy from which they usually collect their prescriptions.
- It should be noted that pharmacy processing times are longer than usual and this will require to be incorporated into the local authority operating protocols.
- Initial discussions with CPS indicated that drivers would need to be Disclosure Scotland checked. We are investigating the necessity for this and if there are any available workarounds to avoid potential issues this may cause in driver availability.

Collection Process

- When you arrive at the community pharmacy to collect the deliveries the pharmacy door may be locked and/ or there may be a queue. You should show your laminated card to the pharmacy and or the members of the public at the front of the queue to gain access to the pharmacy without waiting in the queue.
- Show the pharmacy staff your photo identification. The staff will take a note of your name and will record the names and addresses of the patients whose medication you are collecting for delivery.
- If you are aware that a patient has the virus leave their delivery to the end of your route.
- When you arrive at the patients address go to their door or the area you have been instructed to leave the medicine by the patient.
- **Do not open the bag of medicines and do not post the medicine through the letterbox.**
- Ring the doorbell / knock the door to alert the patient that you are delivering their medication.
- Leave the medication in the designated area and move away to a safe distance from the door (at least 2 meters) but where you still have sight of the medication. Wait for a response.
- If there is no response return to where you left the medicines, ring the doorbell / knock the door and move away to a safe distance and wait for a response.
- If there is still no response, retrieve the medicines and return them for secure storage to either the Community Pharmacy or the Resilience Hub in line with the local policy.
- Inform the Resilience Hub Team that the delivery was unsuccessful immediately, before moving on to the next delivery. It is critical that the Resilience Hub Team follow up directly with the patient as soon as is possible to check on their safety. Shielding patients should be at home at all times, so it is a real possibility that where they do not respond they have taken seriously unwell.

Annex D – Additional Information regarding the Food and essential supplies box (contents & dimensions)

Dimensions

The box is of an open cardboard structure weighing 18kg measuring 330 x400 x 600mm). If an individual has ordered 2 boxes, the boxes will come as individual 18kg boxes, instead of one combined larger box.

Contents

Box contents may vary, however the contents of a typical box contents can be found [here](#). The nutritional profile of the contents of the box has been considered by Food Standards Scotland and is broadly in line with nutritional recommendations. Local authorities are encouraged to augment the package locally, where necessary, especially with chilled products, eggs and dairy, or with food that supports particular diets.

We are working with Food Standards Scotland to provide suggested variations to the box following nutritional assessment and to provide suggested menus for the contents of the box.

Calling Card

Brakes and Bidfood will follow a strict protocol when they make a delivery. They will put the box on the doorstep, ring the bell and step back. If no one answers, they will leave the box and post a calling card through the door.

If no one opens the door, Brakes and Bidfood (or their sub-contractors) should leave the box with a calling card that reads:

“We’ve delivered your weekly shielding grocery package. You couldn’t come to the door when we delivered, so, we’ve left your package outside for you.

If you have trouble bringing the box into your home and your normal support is unavailable, please ask your local authority to help. You can find the number to call here: www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts or in the letter in your grocery box.

Letter Included with Package

“SHIELDING GROCERY PACKAGE

This free grocery package is to support you to self-isolate in order to shield yourself from the coronavirus. This is because you were identified as having a high clinical risk, and have been asked to stringently self-isolate, and have told us you do not have other support, so we need to make sure you can get food without putting yourself at risk by going shopping.

Asking you to stay at home during this period is a really difficult ask of you, but we hope you recognise that it is necessary to protect your own health and to help protect the NHS.

This package should provide you with sufficient food and household essentials for one week and meets nutritional requirements. This is a standard package, so not all of the food may be suitable for everyone. We may be able to offer an enhanced package in future. Please check the contents of the package carefully. If you have particular dietary requirements, do not eat anything that you are unsure about. For example, do not consume foods which may cause you to have an allergic reaction.

If you are not able to eat some of the food supplied and feel that the remaining contents of the package are not enough to feed you for one week, then please contact your local authority, who will support you. You can find your local authority's phone number at www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts or in the contact sheet attached.

If you have trouble bringing the contents of the box into your home and your normal support is unavailable, please ask your local authority to help.

You will receive a package every week. If you live with others and require an additional package for another member of the household who also cannot get access to groceries, you can request one through the SMS Shielding Service or your local authority. If you no longer wish to receive these packages, please text "STOPBOX" to [REDACTED], or contact your local authority. Text "1BOX" or "2BOX" to [REDACTED] at any time, or contact your local authority, to start the service again.

You should be receiving any prescription medicines directly from your community pharmacy. Prescriptions will continue to cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not currently have your prescriptions collected or delivered, you can arrange this by:

- Asking someone who can pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy, and leave them at your door for you (this is the best option, if possible).
- Contacting your local authority who will be able to arrange for your medicines to be delivered to your home. www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts or in the contact sheet attached.

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will make arrangements to have them delivered to you.

Stay safe and stay at home."

Annex E – Chief Medical Officer letter to clinically high risk individuals 8 June

Directorate for Chief Medical Officer
Dr Gregor Smith
Interim Chief Medical Officer



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

[Patient Name]

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

10 June 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

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

SHIELDING YOURSELF AT HOME TO STAY SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Dear [Patient],

You've been sent this letter because you're at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. This is because you have an underlying disease or health condition.

To help keep yourself safe, we're advising that you need to shield at home until at least 31 July. If you need to shield at home for longer, we'll contact you by letter to let you know. You can also check for the latest updates online at mygov.scot/shielding and gov.scot.

If you're the parent or carer of the person named at the top of this letter, this advice applies to them.

We know that this is a very worrying time. The care and treatment you need is a priority for the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland. This letter will give you advice on how to protect yourself and how to access any support you need.

How to keep safe by shielding at home

When shielding, you should:

- stay at home until at least 31 July
- keep 2 metres away from everyone, even those you live with, avoiding as much face to face contact as you can
- get the latest updates about shielding by joining the SMS Shielding Service

Until 18 June, you should not go outside unless it's for fresh air in a private garden or on your doorstep. From 18 June, this advice may change.

Changes to our shielding advice from 18 June

We're looking at making some changes to our shielding advice. When we first asked people to shield at home, we advised against all outdoor exercise. We're now advising that, from 18 June, you can go outdoors for exercise, as long as:

- you do not live in a residential care or nursing home – if you do, our advice will remain to stay at home and not go outdoors for exercise
- coronavirus (COVID-19) infection rates in Scotland are low enough

We'll announce whether rates are low enough in the Scottish Government's daily coronavirus briefing on 18 June, through our SMS Shielding Service and on Scottish Government websites.

Once confirmed, our advice will be that there is no limit on the amount of times you can go out to exercise, or how long you can stay out for. If you decide to go out for exercise, you:

- should go for a walk, wheel, run or cycle
- can go out on your own or with someone you live with
- should maintain strict physical distancing, also known as social distancing, at all times, even if you live with the person you're out with
- should not meet with anyone you do not live with
- should choose times and areas that are quiet, if you can
- should stay close to home so you do not have to use a toilet that is not your own
- should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get back home

We're looking to change our advice because we now know that the risk of getting infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) outdoors is very low if:

- infection rates in Scotland are low enough
- you stay 2 metres away from other people

Going out for exercise can also have real benefits for your physical and mental health.

Other ways shielding might change in the future

We know that you may have mixed feelings about this advice. That's why we want to tell you as much as we can about how shielding might change in the future. We are learning about the virus all the time, and about what increases or reduces the risk to you and to others.

Over the summer, we will:

- give you updated clinical evidence about your conditions and what that means for your risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- help you to understand the changing infection rate in your local area
- give you this information in a way that's helpful and that you can access
- give you access to support to help you make informed choices about your life
- support you to put your choices into practice

We will do this because shielding will be having a huge impact on your life and the lives of your loved ones. It's important that you are given the chance to consider and make informed decisions about what matters to you.

The SMS Shielding Service

The SMS Shielding Service has been set up to give you the latest updates about shielding.

You can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to [REDACTED]. The text you send should only include your CHI number. Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter.

Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service.

As well as updates, you'll also be able to use the SMS Shielding Service to get:

- priority access to delivery slots from local supermarkets – having access to these slots should make it easier for you to book an online delivery
- [REDACTED] weekly grocery packs delivered to your home, if you do not have another way of getting food or household items

You can find out more about how to request priority access to supermarket delivery slots or how to order a weekly grocery pack by reading the 'Support you can get while shielding at home' advice sent with this letter.

If you cannot join the SMS Shielding Service because you do not have a mobile phone

If you cannot join the SMS Shielding Service because you do not have a mobile phone, you can call a free helpline number to ask a question or to ask for help getting groceries. The free helpline number is [REDACTED] and is currently open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm. This helpline number will direct you to local support from your council.

Keeping up-to-date with changes to shielding and shielding support

We'll be in contact by letter about any major changes to our shielding advice before the end of July.

You can also keep up-to-date with any changes we make, either to the support you can get or to shielding advice, by checking online. You'll find the latest shielding advice on mygov.scot/shielding and on NHS Inform.

We'll also use our SMS Shielding Service to send you the latest updates direct to your mobile phone.

If you need to ask someone a question about shielding support or anything else, you can call the free national helpline number on [REDACTED]. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm, and will put you in touch with someone from your local council.

If you're the parent or carer of the person named in this letter

You can sign up to the SMS Shielding Service for the person you look after from your mobile phone. Just make sure you sign up using the CHI number given in this letter, rather than your own CHI number.

Getting support to you and to others

It's important that you either join the SMS Shielding Service or contact your local council's support line if you do not have a mobile phone.

If you do not want support, you should get in touch to let us know by calling [REDACTED]. This will help us focus support on those who do.

Working while shielding

If you cannot work from home, our advice is for you to stay at home and not go to work.

This letter is evidence for your employer that shows you cannot work outside the home. You do not need to get a separate fit note from your GP.

If you're worried about money, check mygov.scot/shielding or gov.scot for details about things like furlough, statutory sick pay and benefits.

Get help online

You can find the latest online health advice on NHS Inform. For the latest Scottish Government updates on coronavirus, visit mygov.scot/shielding or gov.scot.

Yours sincerely,

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

DR GREGOR SMITH

INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Shielding: medical and health advice

Why shielding is not the same as advice to other people

Because you're in a high risk group, you need to stay at home and avoid as much face to face contact as you can.

You should try and stay at least 2 metres away from people, including those you live with, and everyone in your household should follow advice about regular hand washing.

You can go out into your garden or step out onto your doorstep for fresh air, so long as you stay at least 2 metres away from other people.

From 18 June, this advice may change and you'll be able to exercise outdoors, but you should still maintain physical distancing, also known as social distancing, from other people.

We know this advice is hard to follow, and is not the same as advice to people in lower risk groups, but it's advice you need to follow to protect your health and the NHS.

Other people who live with you

Other people in your household do not have to shield themselves. This means that if they have to leave the house to go to work, such as if they're a key worker, they can carry on doing so. However, to help keep you safe, they must follow guidance on physical distancing and reduce their contact outside the home where they can. In your home, you should:

- minimise the time you spend with others in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep any shared spaces well ventilated
- aim to keep 2 metres away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed, where possible
- use separate towels and, if possible, use a separate or, if this is not possible, clean the bathroom with cleaning products after every use
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly, using a dishwasher set to 60 degrees if you can, or in very warm, soapy water

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance to help keep you safe, there is no need for them to wear any special medical clothing or equipment.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, 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. Because you're in a high risk group, you should call 111 if you get any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you, or the person you care for, have cancer

If you, or the person you care for, feel unwell and have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer) within the last 6 weeks, you should phone either the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711 or the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to coronavirus.

You've been sent this letter because you, or the person you care for, has a disease or condition on this list:

Solid organ transplant recipients.

People with specific cancers:

- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs

People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, severe COPD, severe bronchiectasis and pulmonary hypertension.

People with rare diseases, including all forms of Interstitial Lung Disease/Sarcoidosis, and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).

People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection or who have had their spleens removed.

People who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

People who are receiving renal dialysis treatment.

You may have received this letter, even if the above conditions are not relevant to you, if your GP or Hospital Specialist thinks that you would benefit from following this advice.

Looking after your mental wellbeing

We understand this may be a worrying time and that you may find staying at home and having limited contact frustrating. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which can make you feel worse. Simple things you can do to stay mentally and physically active during this time include:

- look for ideas for exercises to do at home on the NHS website
- do things you enjoy – reading, cooking, jigsaws and other indoor hobbies
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs
- try spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight. Get out into the garden or sit on your doorstep if you can, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres from others

Data Protection Statement

You have been identified by your GP practice, local Health Board or securely stored national data, so we could write to you. We would like to assure you that your data has been shared appropriately within the NHS in Scotland and did not include your medical record. During this outbreak, we will maintain your contact details in case we need to contact you again. We will also notify your GP and Health Board that you have been contacted so they can provide support. Should we need to, in order to provide the support noted below, we will share only your contact details with your local authority (your council) so that they can support you. We would highlight that this action is only being taken due to the current coronavirus outbreak.

Support you can get while shielding at home

You'll be able to access the SMS Shielding Service and other shielding support for as long as you're advised to stay at home. At the moment, this is until at least the end of July.

If you need to ask a question

Please note that the SMS Shielding Service number only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls. Also, because the SMS Shielding Service is not checked by a person, it cannot respond to general questions you send by text. The SMS Shielding Service is only able to respond with a single pre-programmed reply to general questions.

You can call a free helpline if you cannot join the SMS Shielding Service and want to request access to support. The free helpline number is [REDACTED] and is currently open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm. This helpline number will direct you to local support from your council.

Priority access to supermarket online delivery slots

If you're finding it hard to book a delivery from a supermarket in Scotland, you can request priority access to online delivery slots. We've partnered with Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose to offer these slots.

Priority access should make it easier for you to get a delivery slot with a supermarket. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee you'll always get your preferred slot.

How to get priority access to online delivery slots

After you've joined the SMS Shielding Service, you'll be sent a text asking you to confirm that we can share your details with supermarkets. Once you've confirmed that we can share your details, this is what will happen next:

- if you're already signed up as an online customer with one of the supermarkets we're partnered with, they'll get in touch with you by email to let you know how to access the delivery service – they'll send your email to the email account you have registered with them
- if you're not signed up as a customer, we'll send you a text to let you know how to sign up with a supermarket that can deliver in your area

If your child is shielding and you're their parent or guardian, you can still request priority access to delivery slots. Your child's details will be shared with the supermarkets, and it will be your child's details you'll need to register with a supermarket in order to access the priority service.

Using the SMS Shielding Service to get weekly grocery packs

If you buy online, or have someone who's able to get the food and household items you need, you should carry on getting things in this way.

If you're not able to get these things, we can send you weekly grocery packs. The grocery packs are free and there is no delivery charge.

Once you have joined the SMS Shielding Service, you can request a weekly grocery pack by texting "1BOX" to [REDACTED]. "1BOX" is all you need to include in the text. If you and someone else in your household both need a grocery pack, text "2BOX" instead. Only one of you needs to send this "2BOX" text.

You can stop the service at any time by texting "STOPBOX" to [REDACTED].

What's in a grocery pack

A standard grocery pack includes enough basic items to last a week. If it does not meet your personal dietary and religious needs, or is not enough to feed you for one week, please contact your local council. Subject to availability, the pack will include:

- Coffee
- Tea Bags
- Biscuits
- Bread
- Cereal
- Baked Beans
- Soups
- Pasta
- Rice / Cous Cous/ Noodles
- Fruit 1 and Fruit 2
- Shower Gel
- Semi-skimmed UHT MILK.
- Cooking Sauce - jar
- Pre potato (whole, washed)
- Tinned Meat
- Tuna
- Veg (peas probably)
- Chopped Tomatoes
- Tinned Fruit
- Toilet Roll

When you can expect a grocery pack

If you've asked to get a weekly grocery pack, it may take up to a week to reach you. After this, deliveries will be made once a week on the same day every week between 6am - 10pm.

Your grocery pack will normally be delivered to your door by Brakes or Bidfood. Sometimes, your local council, a supermarket, charity or emergency service may make the delivery instead. The box will contain a letter from the Scottish Government.

Whoever delivers your pack will leave it outside your door. This means that they will let you know they're at the door by ringing a bell or knocking, but will then step away to a safe distance. If there is no answer they will post a card through your door.

If you're worried that you should have had a grocery pack and it's not been delivered, contact your local council's support line.

If you cannot lift the grocery pack to bring it in from outside, you may need to bring items inside a few at a time. You can also try your local council's support line to see if they can arrange for someone to help you bring your pack inside.

If the address you're living at is different to the one on this letter

If you want your grocery pack delivered to an address that isn't the same as the one on this letter, you need to contact your local council's support line to give them your new address.

Prescriptions

Your local pharmacy should be sending you any prescription medicines that you need. Your prescriptions should also cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not have your prescription medicines sent to you, or want someone you know to pick them up, you can arrange this by:

- asking someone you know to pick them up and to leave them at your door (this is the best option, if possible)
- contacting your local council's support line - they will be able to arrange for your medicines to be delivered to your home

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will arrange to have these delivered to you.

Annex F - SMS Shielding Service troubleshooting

Blanket initial response

When a person first registers with the SMS Shielding Service, by sending their CHI number, they receive the following response:

Thank you for your text. We will contact you shortly with further information about the shielding service. You will not receive texts from any other number for this service. For urgent support needs, please phone your local council. Their shielding support number can be found on the NHS Inform website.

“I have tried to register with the SMS Shielding Service, but I have not had any response.”

- **Could the person have entered the number incorrectly?** The correct number is [REDACTED].
- **Could there have been a problem with the person's mobile signal** that prevented their message from being sent when they tried to register?
- **After the person sent their text, did they turn their phone off for a long time, or did their phone have no signal for a long time?** This could have prevented the service from being able to deliver a confirmation message.

“I have tried to register with the SMS Shielding Service, but I got an error message.”

- **Did the person have enough credit on their phone to send a text?** Texts to the SMS Shielding Service are charged at the person's standard network rate.
- **When did the person try to register?** If it was before 10 April, they may have been affected by a problem with the EE network (which affected some other mobile providers too). This problem blocked people's texts from being sent to the SMS Shielding Service. However, it has now been fixed, so if somebody who was affected tries again, they should now be able to register.

Testing if registered successfully

An individual can check whether they are registered by texting the SMS Shielding Service any message, for example, “Test”. If they are already successfully registered they will receive an automated response depending on their current status, for example:

Thank you for your text. You are signed up for the SMS shielding service. We do not have you on the list for delivery of basic groceries. If you now need groceries delivered to your home, reply 1BOX (no space).

If they are not successfully registered on the system they will receive a messaging them explaining what they need to do

This automated SMS shielding service is for people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. To sign up, please text us your CHI number.

Registration responses – additional texts sent

If the person sends any other text and they are already on the grocery box list, they will receive the following message:

Thank you for your text. You are signed up for the SMS shielding service.
You are now being supported with a weekly grocery service.
If you no longer need a weekly grocery service please reply STOPBOX.
You can start the service again at any time by sending us a text saying 1BOX or 2BOX.
If you need to speak to someone, please phone your local council. Their shielding support number can be found on the NHS Inform website.

If they are not on the grocery box list then they will be reminded of how to register for this service, including details of the supermarket priority delivery access.

Registration responses – if the CHI number does not match

If their CHI number does not match to the database then the person will receive a prompt to double check the number that they have entered. If they do not respond they will receive a further prompt at a later date:

This service is for people at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. The CHI number you sent us doesn't match our records. You may have entered the number incorrectly. Please try again. If you want to speak to someone, please phone your local council. Their shielding support number can be found on the NHS Inform website.

“When I text my CHI number to the SMS Shielding Service, I get a response saying that my CHI number does not match their records.”

- **Has the person received a letter from the previous CMO, or from their GP, to confirm that they are in the shielding group?** The SMS Shielding Service is only for those in the shielding group. A person will only be able to register if their CHI number matches the records of people in the shielding group. Local authorities can check a person's CHI number against the records they received from NSS, to confirm whether the person is on the shielding list.
- **Did the person find out they were in the shielding group from their GP (or specialist doctor)?** After a GP has notified their Health Board that a person should be in the shielding group there may be a delay of several days before records are updated to reflect the fact that the person is now in the shielding group. This means that a person may try to register with the SMS Shielding Service before the records have been updated to include their CHI number. This seems to be the most common cause of registration problems currently.

We suggest that the person keeps trying over the course of a few days. If they still are not able to register, they should contact their GP to check whether the updated records have been passed on. In the meantime, if they need urgent support with groceries, they can arrange this through their local authority.

- **Could the person have entered their CHI number incorrectly?** For example, could they have entered the letter “o” instead of the digit “0”?

Registration responses – additional mobile number

If a person who has already registered with the SMS Shielding Service texts their CHI number to the service again using another mobile number, they will receive a message explaining that the SMS Shielding Service will act and respond to the most recent message on the number from which it was sent. This does not affect their status regarding grocery box orders, it is simply resetting a communication preference.

Food requests

If their CHI number matches to the database they will receive a message asking them about their grocery needs:

You are signed up for the SMS shielding service. We do not have you on the list for delivery of groceries. If you need groceries delivered to your home, reply 1BOX

If there is more than one person in your household, reply 2BOX

If you do not need groceries now but do in the future, text us 1BOX or 2BOX at any time. If family or friends can help, do not use this service.

If you want priority access to supermarket shopping send 1SHOP in a separate text. Supermarkets will then contact you.

For urgent groceries or medications delivery, please phone your local council or [REDACTED].

Depending on the response the service will respond with:

- a grocery order confirmation explaining that the box could take up to seven days to arrive once the order is sent to the suppliers – which could be up to nine days after the initial request is sent by the individual.
- notification that their details will be shared with the supermarkets. If they are a previous customer then they will be contacted directly by the supermarket (likely via email). If they are a new customer, then they will receive texts with further instructions. If no supermarket is able to deliver to them they will be directed to contact their local authority.

For more information see the technical guidance.

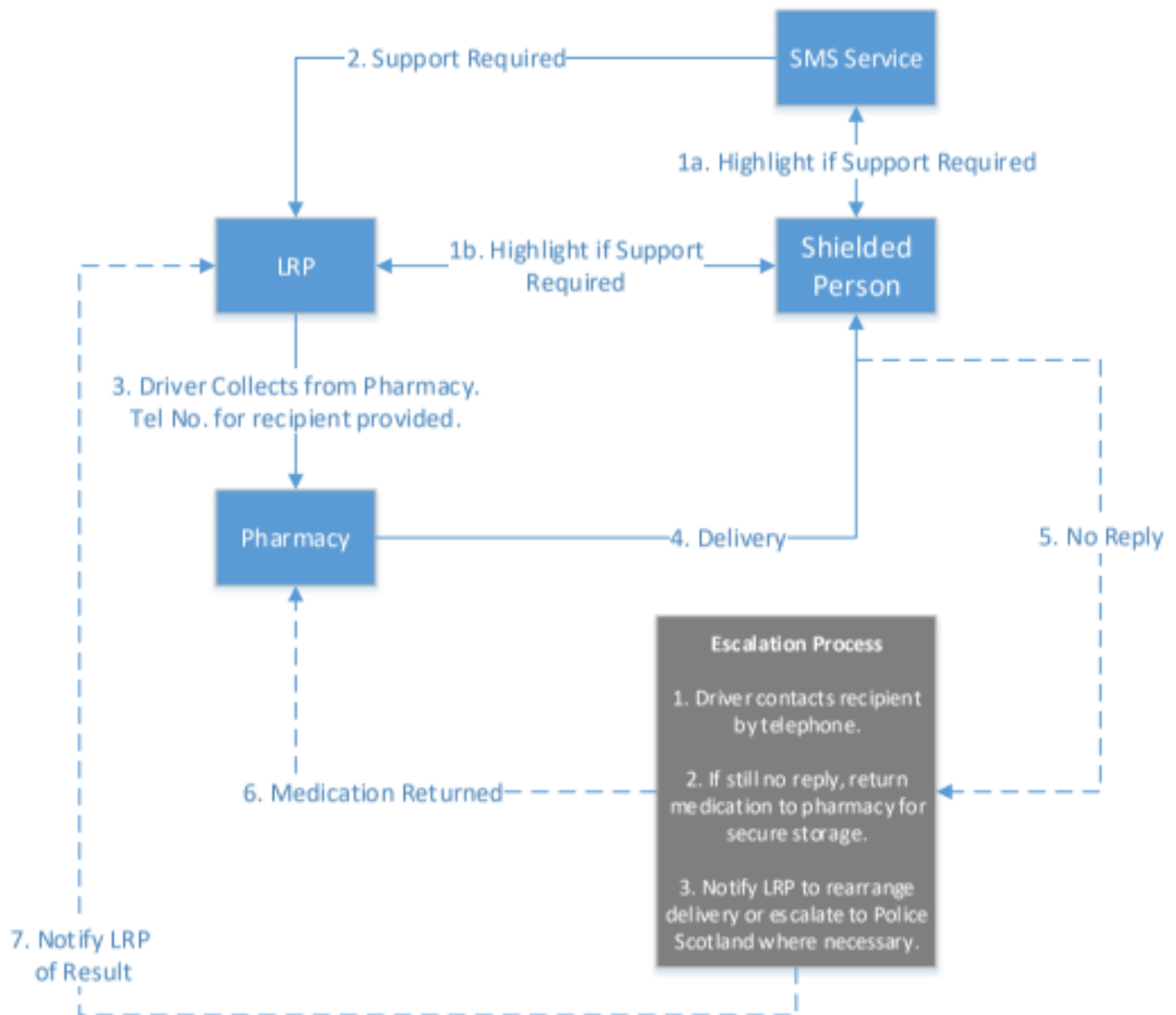
Pharmacy requests

Everyone who has registered with the SMS Shielding Service received the following message on 21 April:

If you need your prescription medicines collected from a pharmacy but have nobody who can do this for you, please phone [REDACTED]. This will connect you to your local authority's shielding support line, so that you can arrange to have your prescription delivered to you.

Annex G – Pharmacy Delivery Process Map

Scottish Government Shielding Programme for Clinically High Risk Pharmacy Delivery Process



Annex H – Update Letter 8 June

Directorate for Chief Medical Officer
Dr Gregor Smith
Interim Chief Medical Officer



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

[Patient Name]

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

8 June 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

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

SHIELDING YOURSELF AT HOME TO STAY SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Dear [Patient],

We sent you a letter earlier this year that advised you to shield at home because you're at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. We asked you to shield at home until at least 18 June.

We're now advising you to stay at home until at least the end of July.

We know that shielding has been tough and has a clear impact on your quality of life, but scientific evidence means we cannot advise you to stop shielding. At the moment, it's the best way for you to stay safe from coronavirus.

Changes to our shielding advice

We're looking at making some changes to our shielding advice. When we first asked you to shield at home, we advised against all outdoor exercise. We're now advising that, from 18 June, you can go outdoors for exercise, as long as:

- you do not live in a residential care or nursing home – if you do, our advice will remain to stay at home and not go outdoors for exercise
- coronavirus (COVID-19) infection rates in Scotland are low enough

We'll announce whether rates are low enough in the Scottish Government's daily coronavirus briefing on 18 June, through our SMS Shielding Service and on Scottish Government websites.

Once confirmed, our advice will be that there is no limit on the amount of times you can go out to exercise, or how long you can stay out for. If you decide to go out for exercise, you:

- should go for a walk, wheel, run or cycle
- can go out on your own or with someone you live with

- should maintain strict physical distancing, also known as social distancing, at all times, even if you live with the person you're out with
- should not meet with anyone you do not live with
- should choose times and areas that are quiet, if you can
- should stay close to home so you do not have to use a toilet that is not your own
- should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get back home

We're looking to change our advice because we now know that the risk of getting infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) outdoors is very low if:

- infection rates in Scotland are low enough
- you stay 2 metres away from other people

Going out for exercise can also have real benefits for your physical and mental health.

Other ways shielding might change in the future

We know that you may have mixed feelings about this advice. That's why we want to tell you as much as we can about how shielding might change in the future. We are learning about the virus all the time, and about what increases or reduces the risk to you and to others.

Over the summer, we will:

- give you updated clinical evidence about your conditions and what that means for your risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)
- help you to understand the changing infection rate in your local area
- give you this information in a way that's helpful and that you can access
- give you access to support to help you make informed choices about your life
- support you to put your choices into practice

We will do this because shielding will be having a huge impact on your life and the lives of your loved ones. It's important that you are given the chance to consider and make informed decisions about what matters to you.

Support while shielding until the end of July

If you're getting support while shielding at home, such as free weekly deliveries of grocery packs, or priority access to online supermarket delivery slots, this support will continue until at least the end of July.

Keeping up-to-date with changes to shielding and shielding support

We'll be in contact by letter about any major changes to our shielding advice before the end of July.

You can also keep up-to-date with any changes we make, either to the support you can get or to shielding advice, by checking online. You'll find the latest shielding advice on mygov.scot/shielding and on NHS Inform.

We'll also use our SMS Shielding Service to send you the latest updates direct to your mobile phone.

If you need to ask someone a question about shielding support or anything else, you can call the free national helpline number on [REDACTED]. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm, and will put you in touch with someone from your local council.

Working while shielding

If you cannot work from home, our advice is for you to stay at home and not go to work.

This letter is evidence for your employer that shows you cannot work outside the home. You do not need to get a separate fit note from your GP.

If you're worried about money, check mygov.scot/shielding or gov.scot for details about things like furlough, statutory sick pay and benefits.

The SMS Shielding Service

The SMS Shielding Service has been set up to give you the latest updates about shielding.

If you have not already, you can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to [REDACTED]. The text you send should only include your CHI number.

Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter.

Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service and give instructions on how to register for support with food access.

We'd like to hear from you if you've been shielding

Public Health Scotland is running an online survey to find out how you feel about shielding in Scotland. The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete and is open until Sunday 14 June 2020.

You can complete the survey at surveys.publichealthscotland.scot.

Yours sincerely,

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

DR GREGOR SMITH

INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Shielding: medical and health advice

How to keep safe by shielding at home

When shielding, you should:

- stay at home and not go outside, except to exercise
- keep 2 metres away from everyone, even those you live with, avoiding as much face to face contact as you can
- get the latest updates about shielding by joining the SMS Shielding Service

Those you live with do not need to stay at home and shield, they can go out as normal.

Access to healthcare

No matter what the next steps are your care, treatment and needs are a priority for the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland.

It is vital that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. This may be routine or urgent GP or hospital care. To ensure we can provide the care you need in a safe and timely manner, your needs will be assessed by a clinician as part of any GP or hospital care. They will do a risk assessment and decide where, when and how you are seen. This risk assessment is part of the care that doctors and other health professionals do every day to meet the needs of their patients.

Following a risk assessment, it may be that your clinician decides it is best to carry out a consultation or appointment over the telephone or via Near Me (a video calling service used by the NHS). Other times, a face to face consultation or appointment may happen at your home, but equally (after assessment of infection risk, clinical need and service capacity) may involve you going to a practice, health centre or hospital to be seen.

Why shielding is not the same as advice to other people

Because you're in a high risk group, our advice is that you should stay at home and avoid as much face to face contact as you can. From 18 June you can go outside for exercise.

We know this advice is hard to follow, and is not the same as advice to people in lower risk groups, but it's advice you need to follow to protect your health and the NHS.

Face coverings

Our advice is to maintain strict physical distancing, also known as social distancing, while exercising outdoors at all times. This is the best way to stay safe. If you do this, you do not need to wear a face covering.

If, for any reason, you think there's a chance you may not be able to maintain physical distancing at all times, you may want to wear a face covering.

By face coverings, we do not mean the wearing of a surgical or other medical grade mask, but 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.

Other people who live with you

Other people in your household do not have to shield themselves. This means that if they have to leave the house to go to work, such as if they're a key worker, they can carry on doing so. However, to help keep you safe, they must follow guidance on physical distancing and reduce their contact outside the home where they can. In your home, you should:

- minimise the time you spend with others in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep any shared spaces well ventilated
- aim to keep 2 metres away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed, where possible
- use separate towels and, if possible, use a separate bathroom or, if this is not possible, clean the bathroom with cleaning products after every use
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly, using a dishwasher set to 60 degrees if you can, or in very warm, soapy water

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance to help keep you safe, there is no need for them to wear any special medical clothing or equipment.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, 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. Because you're in a high risk group, you should call 111 if you get any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you, or the person you care for, have cancer

If you, or the person you care for, feel unwell and have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer) within the last 6 weeks, you should phone either the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711 or the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to coronavirus.

You've been sent this letter because you, or the person you care for, has a disease or condition on this list:

Solid organ transplant recipients.

People with specific cancers:

- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs

People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, severe COPD, severe bronchiectasis and pulmonary hypertension.

People with rare diseases, including all forms of Interstitial Lung Disease/Sarcoidosis, and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).

People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection or who have had their spleens removed.

People who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

People who are receiving renal dialysis treatment.

You may have received this letter, even if the above conditions are not relevant to you, if your GP or Hospital Specialist thinks that you would benefit from following this advice.

Prescriptions

Your local pharmacy should be sending you any prescription medicines that you need. Your prescriptions should also cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not have your prescription medicines sent to you, or want someone you know to pick them up, you can arrange this by:

- asking someone you know to pick them up and to leave them at your door (this is the best option, if possible)
- contacting your local council's support line - they will be able to arrange for your medicines to be delivered to your home

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will arrange to have these delivered to you.

Looking after your mental wellbeing

We understand this may be a worrying time and that you may find staying at home and having limited contact frustrating. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour, which can make you feel worse. Simple things you can do to stay mentally and physically active during this time include:

- look for ideas for exercises to do at home on the NHS website
- spend time doing things you enjoy – reading, cooking, jigsaws and other indoor hobbies
- try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise regularly, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs
- try spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight. Get out into the garden or sit on your doorstep if you can, keeping a distance of at least 2 metres from others

Data Protection Statement

We would like to reassure you that while 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, this information has been shared appropriately within the NHS in Scotland and did not include your medical record. During this outbreak, we will maintain 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. Should we need to, in order to provide some of the additional support noted above, we will share your contact details only with your local authority (your council) in order that they can support you during this difficult time. We would highlight that this action is only being taken due to the current coronavirus outbreak, and would assure you that your local authority would not receive any details of your medical condition or health record.

How long you'll be able to get support from the SMS Shielding Service

You'll be able to access the SMS Shielding Service for as long as you're advised you need to stay at home. At the moment, this is until at least the end of July 2020.

Get help online

You can find the latest online health advice on NHS Inform. For the latest Scottish Government updates on coronavirus, visit [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) or mygov.scot.

Annex I – Call handler FAQs following 8 June Update

What is the change?

From 18 June 2020, people in the groups who have been asked to shield can go outside to take exercise as long as infection rates remain low. This will be confirmed on 18 June at the Scottish Government daily coronavirus briefing, through the SMS shielding service and on the Scottish Government website. It is really important that people keep a physical distance of two metres from others. There is NO change to the support offered to those who are shielded so if you have been getting support or food deliveries this will continue as before.

Does this new advice apply to everyone?

This advice applies to all ages (children, young people and adults). However, it does not apply to those who live in a residential care or nursing home – if you do, our advice will remain to stay at home and not go outdoors for exercise.

Why has this change been made now?

When we were first faced with COVID-19, we knew very little about how likely it was to spread and which people might be most at risk. Now we have much more information, we can give more informed advice. Firstly, we now know that the risks from being outside and catching COVID-19 are very low indeed. This is because studies have shown daylight kills the virus that causes COVID-19 very quickly, within minutes. So the chance of getting the infection from objects outside that have been touched by somebody else is very small. Secondly, we have been monitoring the number of cases of COVID-19 within the community. This number has been dropping steadily over the last 4 weeks, which means the number of people who are infectious is very low – the latest estimate is fewer than 1 in 500 people. Both these factors have allowed us to recommend this change, which will be of benefit to mental and physical health and well-being.

How long can I stay outside?

There is no time limit to how long people go outside for; the important thing is to stay two metres away from other people, so avoid crowded places or busy times. You should always wash your hands when you return indoors.

What can I do outside?

You can do whatever level of exercise feels comfortable for you whether this is walking, wheeling, running or cycling. It is important to consider that if you have not been exercising for the last few months you may wish to take things slowly at first.

How far can I go outside?

The government is asking people to stay within 5 miles of their house for leisure purposes. This is the same for people who are shielded. You can travel in a car either driving yourself or being driven by someone you live with.

Can I meet people from other houses?

At the moment the change is only that you, members of your household and/or carer can go outside to exercise. You should not meet other people outside your household. The main route of transmission of COVID-19 is from droplets spread from an infected person when they cough. Studies have shown that the risk of getting the infection from such droplets is very small if you are 2m (6 feet) or more away, as they will have fallen to the ground. This is why general advice from Government has been to allow groups of no more than 8 to meet up outside while staying 2 metres apart. We are not suggesting that people who have been shielded can meet people from other households. We are taking things slowly to make sure that there isn't an increase in infections.. We very much hope that in time we can recommend that those who are shielded can meet people from other households.

Can I go shopping or to the chemist?

No, at the moment the guidance is still that you cannot go inside other buildings: you can just go outside to exercise or to sit and relax. The virus can survive much longer indoors which is why we are limiting the advice to being outdoors.

Can I go back to work?

Not at the moment, this change means that you can go outside not that you can go back to work. It is important that people who are shielded stay 2 metres away from other people and do not go inside any other buildings.

Will this change advice change again?

Like everything this will be kept under review. If it is felt that community transmission has increased and it is no longer as safe for people who are shielded to go outside then this decision will be reviewed. However, if we are confident that transmission remains well controlled we will continue to review the advice provided.

8 June 2020



[Patient Name]

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

09 July 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

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

UPDATE ON EASING OF SHIELDING ADVICE

Dear [Patient],

We're writing to let you know that we're easing our shielding advice.

We're easing our advice because infection rates in Scotland are now very low, and your chances of catching coronavirus (COVID-19) are also much lower.

The easing of our shielding advice will happen throughout July, as long as infection rates in Scotland continue to fall.

If you live in a residential care or nursing home

This advice does not apply if you live in a residential care or nursing home. Instead, your care home should be following the Care Home Visiting Pathway. You can find out more about this at gov.scot.

Changes to current shielding advice

From 10 July, we're advising that you can:

- stop physically distancing from the people you live with
- go indoors to use a toilet in someone else's house, when visiting them outdoors
- meet up to 8 people outdoors, from 2 other households, in a single day – it does not need to be the same 2 households every day
- travel further than 5 miles from your house, as far as you want
- book self-catering accommodation (without shared facilities) or travel to a second home - try only to stay with people you live with at home

If you live alone, or you only live with children who are under 18, you can agree to form an extended household with one other household. This means you, and anyone else in the 2 households, can visit each other indoors and stay over without physical distancing.

If you're a shielding adult, we're also advising that any children under 12 that you live with do not need to physically distance outdoors from other children under 12.

Keeping up-to-date with further changes to shielding

As long as infection rates remain low, we expect to confirm further changes to shielding later in July.

You can keep up-to-date with any changes we make by checking online. You'll find the latest shielding advice on mygov.scot/shielding and on NHS Inform. We'll also use our SMS Shielding Service to send you the latest updates direct to your mobile phone.

If you need to ask someone a question about shielding support or anything else, you can call the free national helpline number on [REDACTED]. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm, and will put you in touch with someone from your local council.

Our plans for shielding after 31 July

When we first advised you to shield, the coronavirus infection rate in Scotland was much higher than it is now. Shielding at home was the best way for you to stay safe.

We hope, as long as the infection rate in Scotland carries on falling, that we'll be able to advise you to stop shielding from 1 August. If we advise you to stop shielding it will be because the risk to you is very low and because we do not want you to carry on shielding if you do not need to.

How we will support you after 31 July

We know that you may be worried about stopping shielding. This is why we're looking to support you by keeping parts of the shielding programme open. Even if we advise you to stop shielding from 1 August, you'll:

- be kept on a list of shielding people, so we can contact you and update you - we will let you know if the risk to you from COVID-19 changes
- be able to access health guidance about your specific condition – this guidance will be kept up-to-date after 31 July and will include advice about how to keep yourself safe
- get updates from our SMS Shielding Service – even if our advice is to stop shielding
- get guidance on speaking to your employer about how you can return to work safely
- be able to access help and support online at mygov.scot/shielding

We'll announce whether rates are low enough for you to stop shielding before the end of July. This will be through our daily coronavirus briefing and at mygov.scot/shielding. We'll also let you know by letter and through our SMS Shielding Service.

Support with food and household items

Weekly deliveries of grocery boxes and priority access to online supermarket delivery slots will carry on until at least the end of July.

If our advice is for you to stop shielding from 1 August, we'll pause some of our shielding programme. This means weekly deliveries of grocery boxes will stop at the end of July.

If you still need support with food and household items after the end of July, we'll make sure you carry on getting access to help. If we announce a pause to shielding, we'll let you know how to access this help.

Working while shielding

If you cannot work from home, our advice remains for you not to go into work until at least 1 August.

If you're worried about money, check mygov.scot/shielding or gov.scot for details about things like furlough, statutory sick pay and benefits.

We've already advised employers that they need to make workplaces COVID-secure. We're looking at whether this means that you'll be able to return to work safely from 1 August.

If it is safe for you to go back to work, we'll give you further advice about what you'll need to check with your employer before you return to work. We'll give you this advice before 1 August.

Going back to school

As long as infection rates in Scotland stay low, children who have been asked to shield should be able to return to school at the same time as other children. We will confirm if this is the case before the end of July.

If you're worried about a child who's shielding going back to school, you can check the latest advice about returning to school at mygov.scot/shielding.

The SMS Shielding Service

The SMS Shielding Service has been set up to give you the latest updates about shielding.

If you have not already, you can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to [REDACTED]. The text you send should only include your CHI number.

Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter. Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service and give you instructions on how to register for support with food access.

Yours sincerely,

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

DR GREGOR SMITH

INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Shielding: medical and health advice

Why we're making changes to shielding

Falling infection rates in Scotland mean the risks of you catching the virus are very low. This is true as long as you:

- follow the advice in this letter
- regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds
- follow physical distancing guidance - 2 metres away from anyone you do not live with
- try to avoid touching your face, as much as you can
- avoid contact with anyone who has the symptoms of coronavirus

Face coverings

Our advice is to maintain strict physical distancing at all times. This is the best way to stay safe. If you do this, you do not need to wear a face covering.

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. You do not need to wear a surgical or other medical grade mask.

You may want to wear a face covering if you think there's a chance you may not be able to maintain physical distancing. This advice will apply even though shielding is being eased.

Other people you live with

Other people in your household do not need to shield themselves. They only need to follow the advice given to the rest of the public in Scotland.

If you've chosen to shield as a household, our advice is that the people you live with can return to work or school.

Access to healthcare

Your needs, care and treatment remain a priority for the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland. It is vital that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. This may be routine or urgent GP or hospital care. A clinician will assess your needs as part of any GP or hospital care. This is so that they can continue to provide the care you need in a safe and timely manner. They will do a risk assessment and decide where, when and how you are seen. Your clinician may decide it is best to carry out a consultation or appointment over the telephone or via Near Me (a video calling service used by the NHS). Other times, a face to face consultation or appointment may happen at your home. Equally, after assessment of infection risk and clinical need, you may need to go to a practice, health centre or hospital.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, phone the NHS on 111. Symptoms include:

- a new, continuous cough
- a high temperature (above 37.8 °C)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Because you're in a high risk group, you should call 111 if you get any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you, or the person you care for, have cancer

If you, or the person you care for, feel unwell and have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer) within the last 6 weeks, you should phone the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711. Or you can call the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to coronavirus.

Prescriptions

Your local pharmacy may already send you the prescription medicines that you need. Your prescriptions should cover the same length of time as usual.

You can ask someone else to pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy for you. They can then bring this to your home.

Your local authority can also arrange a delivery for you if you do not have anyone who can do this. You can contact your local authority directly or via the free national helpline on [REDACTED].

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will arrange to have these delivered to you.

Data Protection Statement

We have used GP practice, local health board or securely stored national data to identify people. This is so we could write to them. This information has been shared appropriately within the NHS in Scotland. It did not include medical records.

We will notify GPs and health boards about those who have been contacted. This is so that they can also provide support.

We will only share contact details with local authorities and our partner retailers. This will allow them to provide support and deliver groceries and medication.

During this outbreak, we will keep your contact details in case we need to contact you again. This action is only being taken due to the current coronavirus outbreak. No details of medical conditions or health records are being shared.

Support you can get while shielding at home

Even if shielding is paused, we'll still send key updates through the SMS Shielding Service. The service will carry on for as long as it's needed. If we think it's no longer needed, we'll give you plenty of notice that it's ending.

The support you are receiving will remain in place until shielding is paused. We will confirm when and how our support services will change before the end of July.

Priority access to supermarket online delivery slots

Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose all offer priority access to their online delivery slots. Priority access should make it easier for you to get a delivery slot with a supermarket. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee you'll always get your preferred slot.

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to sign up. You can do this by texting **1SHOP** to [REDACTED]. This will confirm that we can share your details with supermarkets.

If you're already an online customer with one of the supermarkets, they'll contact you by email. They'll send this email to the email account you have registered with them.

If you're not signed up as a customer, we'll send you a text to let you know how to sign up with a supermarket that can deliver in your area.

If you're a parent, guardian or carer of someone who is shielding, you can request priority access to delivery slots on their behalf. It is the details of the person who is shielding that will be shared with the supermarkets. You will also need to register their details with a supermarket to access the priority service.

Many supermarkets now offer a gift card scheme to allow a friend or family member to pick up shopping for you. Some stores also offer their own food box schemes.

Weekly grocery boxes

If you buy online, or have someone who's able to get the groceries you need, you should carry on getting things in this way. If you're not able to get groceries by other means, we can send you weekly grocery boxes. The grocery boxes will stop when shielding is paused.

You can request a weekly grocery box by texting **1BOX** to [REDACTED]. If you and someone else in your household both need a grocery box, text **2BOX** instead. Only one of you needs to send this **2BOX** text.

The grocery boxes are free and there is no delivery charge. You can stop the service at any time by texting **STOPBOX** to [REDACTED].

Support from your local council

Call the free helpline on [REDACTED] to talk to someone from your council who can:

- help you access shielding support services without needing to use the SMS Shielding Service
- support you to access food after shielding is paused, if you need this help
- provide additional items if the weekly grocery boxes do not meet your needs
- help you bring boxes inside or find out what has happened to a missing box
- change the address for your weekly grocery boxes

Please note that the SMS Shielding Service number only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls. Also, the SMS Shielding Service is not checked by a person and cannot respond to questions. The SMS Shielding Service can only respond with a pre-programmed reply to general questions.

Scottish Government Shielding route map (for those at highest risk)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Decisions will be kept under review as the evidence base on the impact of the virus and the effectiveness of different interventions builds.

Further guidance will be available for each change on mygov.scot/shielding.

Hygiene helps: No matter what our shielding advice is, it is important to regularly wash your hands and clean hard surfaces. Everyone should also cover their mouths to cough. This should either be into a tissue which you can dispose straightaway, otherwise into your bent elbow.

	Up to 10 July	From 10 July	Expected 17 July	Expected 24 July	Shielding paused
		Confirmed 8 July	Aim to confirm 16 July	Aim to confirm 23 July	Confirm before August
How to protect yourself and others	Physically distance from people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	No need to physically distance from the people you live with	Physical distancing guidance for the “at risk” group in Scotland
	Face coverings if you can't physically distance	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)	Face coverings should be worn where you cannot physically distance as well as where mandatory (shops and transport)
Seeing family and friends	Meet outdoors with up to 8 people from only 1 household	Meet outdoors with up to 8 people from 2 households	Meet outdoors with up to 8 people from 2 households	Meet indoors with up to 8 people from 2 households , with physical distancing	Guidance on meeting people same as wider population, but maintain physical distancing
		Use of indoor toilets if visiting people outdoors	Use of indoor toilets if visiting people outdoors	Use of indoor toilets if visiting people indoors	Use of indoor toilets if visiting people indoors

		Can form an extended household ¹	Can form an extended household ¹	Can form an extended household ¹	Can form an extended household ¹
Getting around	Travel up to 5 miles for outdoor exercise	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel	No limit on distance you can travel
	Avoid public transport	Avoid public transport	Avoid public transport	Can use public transport wearing a face covering	Can use public transport wearing a face covering
	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Only go in a car with someone you live with	Can go in a car with someone you do not live with	Can go in a car with someone you do not live with

¹ Someone who lives alone, or who lives only with children under 18, can agree with another household to form an “extended household”. This means that they are treated as being part of that household. You can visit this household indoors and stay over, without physical distancing.

Scottish Government Shielding route map (for those at highest risk)

Decisions will be kept under review as the evidence base on the impact of the virus and the effectiveness of different interventions builds.

Further guidance will be available for each change on mygov.scot/shielding.

Hygiene helps: No matter what our shielding advice is, it is important to regularly wash your hands and clean hard surfaces. Everyone should also cover their mouths to cough. This should either be into a tissue which you can dispose straightaway, otherwise into your bent elbow.

	Up to 10 July	From 10 July	Expected 17 July	Expected 24 July	Shielding paused
		Confirmed 8 July	Aim to confirm 16 July	Aim to confirm 23 July	Confirm before August
Leisure, shopping, and eating out	Avoid staying anywhere outside your own home	Travel to self-catering accommodation ² and second homes allowed	Can use all holiday accommodation	Can use all holiday accommodation	Can use all holiday accommodation

	Avoid going inside any building other than your own home			Can go to pubs and restaurants with outdoor spaces	Can attend indoor pubs and restaurants
			Can go to outdoor markets	Can go into indoor shops, pharmacies and indoor markets Can attend hairdressers and barbers ³	Can go into indoor shops, pharmacies and indoor markets Can attend hairdressers and barbers
			Can visit outdoor gardens	Can visit museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas	Can visit museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas
Schools and childcare	Since 30 June, some children and young people will receive letters explaining they no longer need to shield	Children under 12, who live with someone shielding, do not need to avoid physical contact when playing outside with others under 12		Can use childcare providers	Children who had been asked to shield can return to school – date to be confirmed
Work	Work from home, where possible	Work from home, where possible	Work from home, where possible	Work from home, where possible	Can return to Covid safe workplace

² “Self-catering accommodation” must have no shared facilities and must be accessible via an external door.

³ Check with the company owner that they have put in place “enhanced hygiene measures”. They will know what this means



[Patient Name]

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

24 July 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

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

UPDATE ON STOPPING SHIELDING

Dear [Patient],

We're writing to advise you to stop shielding from 1 August.

This is because the rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland is currently very low. To stay safe, you should follow advice given to everyone in Scotland about physical distancing and regular handwashing, but you do not need to carry on shielding.

Staying safe and the support you'll carry on getting

Even though the COVID-19 infection rate is very low in Scotland, we know that you may have mixed feelings about stopping shielding.

This is why we're keeping lots of shielding support open, and creating new ways of support. You'll:

- still get updates from our SMS Shielding Service – you'll soon also be able to get regular updates on the COVID-19 infection rate in your local area through the SMS Shielding Service
- be able to access help and support online – this includes up-to-date health guidance about a range of specific conditions, help in understanding what sort

of activities are safer than others, and checklists on how to protect yourself in daily life

- be kept on a list of shielding people, so we can contact and update you directly if our advice changes, such as if there's an increase in infection rates (you can request to be removed from the list by asking your GP or hospital clinician)
- be able to access guidance on returning to work or school
- be able to contact our helpline on [REDACTED], if you need help from your local council

You can find online support at mygov.scot/shielding.

You should also take a look at the 'Quick Guide to Risk' sheet included with this letter. This sheet gives you advice about everyday things that are 'low risk' and 'higher risk'. Please keep these risks in mind when choosing what you do and where you go.

If the infection rate in Scotland goes up

The infection rate in Scotland may rise as well as fall in the coming months. Small changes will not affect the advice we've given in this letter, but if we start to see an increase in the infection rate that concerns us, we may advise you to take extra steps to stay safe. If we need to, we'll let you know by letter and through the SMS Shielding Service.

As we keep on improving our knowledge about COVID-19, we're also reviewing evidence about who needs to take extra steps to stay safe. If we find out about a change that affects you, we will contact you.

If you live in a residential care or nursing home

If you live in a residential care or nursing home, you may be able to see visitors outdoors, but a lot of the advice in this letter does not apply to you.

You can find out more about care home advice, and the Care Home Visiting pathway at gov.scot.

Buying food and the things you need

We're now advising that you can go into supermarkets and shops. If you do, we'd advise you to wear a face covering, and to follow physical distancing and hand hygiene advice.

If you'd rather get deliveries to your home, you can carry on getting priority access to online supermarket delivery slots after 1 August. This means you should be able to book an online delivery slot even if it gets busy, although we cannot guarantee you'll always get your preferred slot. If you have not already signed up for this priority access, you have until 31 July to sign up using the SMS Shielding Service or by calling [REDACTED].

Because you can buy the things you need either by going into shops or by ordering online, we're stopping deliveries of weekly grocery boxes at the end of July.

Joining the SMS Shielding Service

We advise you to sign up for the SMS Shielding Service to make sure you get the latest updates – this service will carry on beyond 1 August.

If you've not already, you can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to [REDACTED]. The text you send should only include your CHI number.

Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter. Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service. Once on, you do not need to do anything else to stay on the SMS Shielding Service.

Information about employment and schools

We have also included information in this letter about going back to work and school. This advice has been provided by the Scottish Government.

We know the last months will have been a very hard time for you. While our advice is changing after 31 July, we are still here to support you.

Yours sincerely,

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

DR GREGOR SMITH

INTERIM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Shielding: medical and health advice

Keeping safe

To stay safe, we're still advising you to:

- follow the latest guidance about physical distancing - at the moment, physical distancing advice is for you to stay 2 metres away from anyone you do not live with
- regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds
- try to avoid touching your face, as much as you can
- avoid contact with anyone who has the symptoms of COVID-19

Face coverings

You must wear a face covering when visiting shops and on public transport, 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 and people who are communicating with someone who lip reads.

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.

If, for any reason, you think there's a chance you may not be able to maintain physical distancing while outside, you may want to wear a face covering.

By face coverings, we do not mean the wearing of a surgical or other medical grade mask, but 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.

Even if you're wearing a face covering, you should still try to maintain physical distancing as much as you can.

Access to healthcare

It is vital that you get the care you need in the safest way possible. This may be the doctor or team who usually support you, but also includes other routine or urgent GP or hospital care. To ensure we can provide the care you need in a safe and timely manner, your needs will be assessed by a clinician as part of any GP or hospital care. They will do a risk assessment and decide where, when and how you are seen. This risk assessment is part of the care that doctors and other health professionals do every day to meet the needs of their patients.

Following a risk assessment, it may be that your clinician decides it is best to carry out a consultation or appointment over the telephone or via Near Me (a video calling service used by the NHS). Other times, a face to face consultation or appointment

may happen at your home, but equally (after assessment of infection risk and clinical need) may involve you going to a practice, health centre or hospital to be seen.

Before COVID-19 arrived, clinicians may have advised a small number of people to not go out and meet other people or do certain things because of their specific health condition or their treatments. If your clinician provides you with advice about this, you should follow this advice as they know you personally. If this happens to you, it does not mean you are being advised to shield again because of an increase in the levels of COVID-19. If you're ever unsure about any health advice or treatment, you should discuss this with your healthcare team.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, 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

If you, or the person you care for, feel unwell and have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer) within the last 6 weeks, you should phone either the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711 or the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should call even if you do not think feeling unwell is due to coronavirus.

Data Protection Statement

We would like to reassure you that while 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, this information has been shared in a limited way within the NHS in Scotland and did not include your medical record. During this outbreak, 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. Should we need to, in order to provide some of the additional support noted above, we will share your contact details only with your local authority (your council) in order that they can support you during this difficult time. We would highlight that this action is only being taken due to the current coronavirus outbreak, and would assure you that your local authority would not receive any details of your medical condition or health record. You can request your contact details to be removed by asking your GP or hospital clinician.

Mental health and wellbeing

You can now book GP and NHS appointments as normal. If you feel worried and want to speak to someone, your GP or other healthcare provider can help make sure you get the support you need.

You can also find help online from the Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH) at www.samh.org.uk and over the phone from:

- Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87

- Samaritans - 116 123

Influenza vaccine

If you're able to get the flu vaccine, you should consider getting this for your health as soon as it's available, even though it will not protect against COVID-19.

Going back to work from 1 August

Our advice is that you should carry on working from home, if you can.

If you cannot work from home, you can return to a workplace from 1 August. You do not need to get a return to work note from your GP or care provider to go back.

When at work, you should follow physical distancing advice. If you cannot, your employer must have put other measures in place to help keep you safe.

If you're worried about going back to work, you should speak to your employer about your concerns. We have given guidance to employers in Scotland about keeping their employees safe at this time, and what they need to do for those who are at higher risk from COVID-19. A key part of this is a workplace risk assessment tool that can help you and your employer

understand your personal risks and what kind of support you may need. You can access the risk assessment online at mygov.scot/shielding.

If you're not able to go back to work

If the risks to you and the kind of job you do mean it's hard for you to return to a workplace, some employers may be able to offer you leave. Beyond the annual leave you're able to take as normal, known as your statutory leave entitlement, it's up to your employer and you to decide what's best if you're not able to return to work. Options include:

- If you have been furloughed for at least a full 3-week period prior to 30 June, your employer may be able to apply for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Under this scheme you can be furloughed and receive 80% of your regular wages, up to a cap of £2,500. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme runs until the end of October.
- You will be able to get Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) until 31 July. After that, if you feel you're not able to return to work, you can discuss your fitness for work with your GP or specialist care provider.

Going back to school

We expect all children who are shielding to be able to return to school in August, unless given advice from a GP or healthcare provider not to.

We expect children will be able to return to school because we now know that children are at much lower risk of severe illness from coronavirus than adults, and also less likely to pass on the virus to other people.

If you're worried about this, you can speak to your child's school about how they're getting ready to open fully in August. We'll also be publishing detailed 'Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020' on gov.scot from 30 July, though our advice remains to speak to your child's school if you have concerns.

Support you can get while shielding at home

If you need to ask a question

Please note that the SMS Shielding Service number only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls. Also, because the SMS Shielding Service is not checked by a person, it cannot respond to general questions you send by text. The SMS Shielding Service is only able to respond with a single pre-programmed reply to general questions.

You can call a free helpline if you cannot join the SMS Shielding Service and want to request access to support. The free helpline number is [REDACTED] and is currently open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm. This helpline number will direct you to local support from your council.

Priority access to supermarket online delivery slots

If you're finding it hard to book a delivery from a supermarket in Scotland, you can request priority access to online delivery slots. We've partnered with Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose to offer these slots.

Priority access should make it easier for you to get a delivery slot with a supermarket. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee you'll always get your preferred slot.

How to get priority access to online delivery slots

After you've joined the SMS Shielding Service, you'll be sent a text asking you to confirm that we can share your details with supermarkets. Once you've confirmed that we can share your details, this is what will happen next:

- if you're already signed up as an online customer with one of the supermarkets we're partnered with, they'll get in touch with you by email to let you know how to access the delivery service – they'll send your email to the email account you have registered with them
- if you're not signed up as a customer, we'll send you a text to let you know how to sign up with a supermarket that can deliver in your area

If your child is shielding and you're their parent or guardian, you can still request priority access to delivery slots. Your child's details will be shared with the supermarkets, and it will be your child's details you'll need to register with a supermarket in order to access the priority service.

Help with money

If you're worried about money, you can get help and support online, through mygov.scot and GOV.UK.

If you need to speak to someone about debt or employment, you can talk to Citizens Advice Scotland on 0800 028 1456.

A quick guide to risk for the shielding group

The number of people who are infectious is much lower. However, the risk is still the same if you were to become infected with the virus. You may want to consider this when making decisions about what is important to you.



	Low risk	Higher risk
Being active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercising outdoors alone Outdoor non-contact activities Going swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor contact sports Indoor non-contact activities Going to the gym
Health and care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting personal care at home Seeing your GP or clinician Going to a pharmacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing care for others Sitting in a busy waiting room Visiting a day centre
Meeting others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting people outdoors Forming an extended household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting people indoors Physical contact with people you do not live with
Shopping and leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going to an outdoor market Going to the shops Getting your haircut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going to a museum Going to a busy beach Going to the cinema
Travel and holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay for petrol at the pump Self-catering accommodation Travelling outwith your area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going in someone else's car Staying at a hotel Travelling by bus or train
Eating and drinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picnic outside with others Sitting outside a café, restaurant or pub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having people over for a meal Sitting inside a café, restaurant or pub

mygov.scot/shielding

For school and work, see separate guidance