



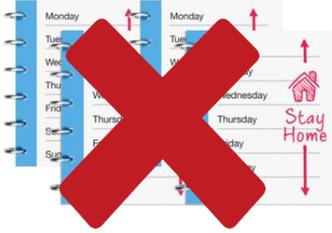
# Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (COVID-19) (shielding)

## December 2020

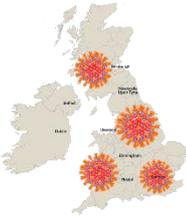
Who this guidance is for	
	This guidance is for people <b>most likely</b> to get very poorly from coronavirus (COVID-19).
What this guidance is for	
	It is an update to replace the old guidance. This guidance started on 2 December.

Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (shielding)

	<p>On 5 November, people were asked to stay at home most of the time for 4 weeks.</p>
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	<p>The 4 weeks staying at home time ended on 2 December.</p>
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## What has changed

	<p>The number of people getting the virus is different in different areas of the country.</p>
	<p>Areas of <b>England</b> have 3 different levels of rules depending on how many people are catching the virus.</p>
	<p>The different levels of rules are called tiers.</p>
	<p>The rules are for everyone but there are extra things people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus can do to stay healthy and well.</p>

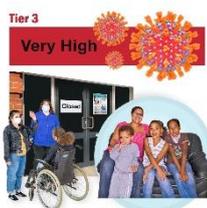
Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (shielding)



When people first started getting sick from coronavirus, some people were asked by their doctor to stay at home all the time. This was called 'shielding'.

Staying at home all the time was hard for many people and made some feel sad and lonely.

This guidance gives extra advice about things people can do to stay healthy and well and not feel too sad or lonely.



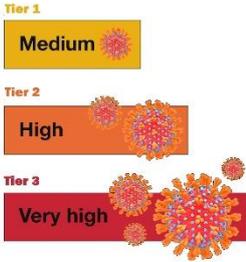
In the future, only people living in the very worst affected areas will be told to shield.

This will only be in **some** Tier 3 areas.

This will be based on advice from the top doctor in the country.

You will **not** need to stay at home all the time, **unless** you get a new letter from the government telling you to shield.

Guidance on protecting people most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus (shielding)

	<p>This is because different parts of England will have different shielding rules depending on how high the risk is of catching the virus.</p>
	<p>Some areas are <b>medium</b>, some are <b>high</b>, and some are <b>very high</b>.</p> <p><b>Medium</b> areas are called <b>Tier 1</b>. <b>High</b> areas are called <b>Tier 2</b>. <b>Very high</b> areas are called <b>Tier 3</b>.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">What level of advice should you follow</h2>	
  <p><b>Tier 1</b>      <b>Tier 2</b></p>     	<p>If you are looking at this online you can find the area you live in by postcode and check what tier you are in by clicking <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>If you must travel into an area in a different tier (for example to go to work or school), you should follow the guidance for whichever area is in the <b>higher</b> tier.</p> <p>For example, if you live in a Tier 1: Medium area but work in a Tier 2: High area, follow the work advice for Tier 2: High area.</p> <p>If you live in a Tier 2: High area but work in a Tier 1: Medium area, still follow the advice for Tier 2: High areas.</p>

## General advice for people living in all areas of England



### Mixing with other people

Wash your hands with soap and water lots of times during the day.

Don't spend too much time with people unless you live with them or they provide care for you.

Don't sit or stand close to people who do not usually live in your house or care for you.

If the rules where you live allow you to meet other people, try to meet them outdoors.

If you meet people indoors, open windows to let fresh air in.



It is a good idea to get exercise. You can exercise inside or outdoors.

Remember to stay away from people who don't live with or care for you.

The NHS Live well website has lots of ideas for how to keep fit and healthy.

If you are reading this online click [here](#).



## Work

If you work, try to work from home.

If you need to spend money so you can work from home, you might be able to get help from Access to work. To find out more, click [here](#).

If you can't work from home, you can still go to work in all tiers. Your boss must make sure your workplace is safe for you to go into.

If you are worried about health and safety at your workplace, tell your union, your council or the Health and Safety Executive.

To find out more, click [here](#).

If you are worried about your work, you can get advice from ACAS about your rights.



To find out more, phone the ACAS helpline on **0300 123 1100** or click [here](#).

If you can't work from home and you can't work in your workplace, talk to your boss about going on furlough.

This means you can stay at home and stop working. You will keep your job and the government will pay most of your wages.

The government will do this until 31 March 2021.

## Travel

Try not to travel on buses and trains. If you must, go at quiet times. You must wear a face covering unless there is a particular reason why you can't.

Travelling in a car could be safer, but try not to travel in a car with anyone who does not live with or care for you.



## School

You can still go to school unless your GP or hospital doctor has told you not to.

## Shopping

If you go to shops, go at quieter times. You must wear a face covering unless there is a particular reason why you can't.

If you need help getting shopping or medicines, ring NHS Volunteer Responders on **0808 196 3646** (8am to 8pm) or to arrange online, click [here](#).

## Getting extra care and support

Whatever tier your area is in your doctors and care providers will still be there to support you if you need them.

You should still ask for help from the NHS. You can also do lots of things online like ordering prescriptions or talking to your doctor.



The NHS have a website called health at home. If you are reading this online find out more by clicking [here](#).

If you feel ill, ring **111** for **advice**. Ring **999** in an **emergency**.

People who support or care for you can still visit. They should not get close to you unless they need to.

Paid carers can find information about personal protective equipment by clicking [here](#). Unpaid carers can find information by clicking [here](#).

You can still get support from local charities and NHS Volunteer Responders. Call **0808 196 3646** between 8am and 8pm or if you are reading this online click [here](#).

Speak to your doctor or nurse to arrange transport support.

## Mental Health



If you are feeling upset or worried, **Every Mind Matters** is a website with useful information – to find out more, click [here](#).

If you or someone you look after is struggling to cope with their mental health it is very important you ask for help straight away.

## Special rules over the Christmas period



This year has been very hard for lots of people.

The government understands that people will want to see their loved ones at Christmas.

So that this can happen, there will be some changes to the rules about spending time with people over the Christmas period.



The changes to the rules mean that people in 1 household can join up with up to 2 other households to form a Christmas bubble.

People in the bubble can meet outside or inside including in their own home.

The changes to the rules will start on 23 December and finish on 27 December.

If you are reading this online, you can find out more by clicking [here](#).

People who might get very poorly from coronavirus can be part of a Christmas bubble, if they choose.

The more people you meet, the higher chance you have of catching the virus.



You should think very carefully about the risk, but it is your choice.

If you do choose to form a Christmas bubble you should keep a safe distance from the people you don't usually live with.

Everyone should remember to clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser (gel) lots of times during the day.

Try to keep windows and doors open to let fresh air in and clean things that get touched a lot like door handles often.

Think about who you sit next to at mealtimes and think about wearing a face covering indoors.

If you don't feel happy about spending time with people indoors you could meet up with people outside, go for a walk or spend time together online.



It is important you don't feel you have to do anything you are not happy with.



The most important thing is that you get to spend Christmas in the way that is right for you.



It is important that the other people in your Christmas bubble understand that you could get very poorly from coronavirus.



They can help by being extra careful in the days before they come to see you by not spending time with other people.



Once the Christmas bubble time finishes on 27 December you should follow the rules for your local area.

## Extra rules and advice for people living in Tier 1: Medium areas

Tier 1



Lots of the guidance is the same as in the general advice section of this guide, but there are some extra rules you **must** follow.

If you meet people who do not live with you, or who are in your support bubble, you **must not** meet in a group of more than 6, indoors or outdoors.

If you can, you are advised to exercise outdoors.

The more you can stay away from other people the less chance you have of catching the virus.

Always stay 2 metres away from other people including in your home.

## Extra rules and advice for people living in Tier 2: High areas

Tier 2

High



Lots of the guidance is the same as in the general advice section of this guide, but there are some extra rules you **must** follow.

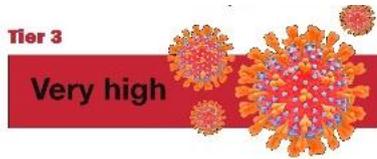
You must not meet with people indoors **anywhere** unless they are part of your household or support bubble.

You can see friends and family you do not live with outside, including in a garden or other outdoor space.

If you meet outside with friends and family that you do not live with, you must not meet in a group of more than 6. In England, this includes children and young people of any age.

It's a good idea to go outside for exercise but remember to stay a safe distance from others. The fewer people you meet, the less likely you are to catch the virus.

## Extra rules and advice for people living in Tier 3: Very high areas



Lots of the advice is the same as in the general guidance but there are some extra rules you **must** follow.

You can only meet friends and family who are not in your household or support bubble in certain outdoor spaces. You can find a list of these places in the [Tier 3: Very high guidance](#).

It is still a good idea to go outside for exercise even in Tier 3 but stay away from busy areas.

In Tier 3 areas lots of people might be passing on the virus so stay at home as much as possible.

Think about how you can stay apart from people even in your own home.

You should not travel out of the area you live in.

## Shielding



Some adults and children have a health condition that means they are **most likely to get very poorly** and must go to hospital if they get coronavirus.

They might need to do more than other people to try to stop themselves getting coronavirus.

This is also known as 'shielding'.

The government might advise you to follow stricter shielding rules if you live in Tier 3 areas where lots of people have the virus.

This will be based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer (top doctor). This will only be in some Tier 3 areas, and the government will write to you to tell you.

You will be able to get extra support from your local council and chemists to help keep you safe.



## Work

If you get a letter telling you to shield, **do not** go into your workplace.

Talk to your boss about working from home or going on furlough.

If your boss can't furlough you, you might be able to get sick pay and other benefits. You can use the letter to show why you are claiming benefits.

Other people who live with you who won't get very poorly from coronavirus should still go into work if they can't work from home.



## School

If your doctor has told you that you are still at highest risk, you should follow the shielding advice and not go to school.

Your school or college will make sure you can learn from home.

Other children in your household can still go to school.



## Mixing with others

Stay at home as much as possible and do not travel.

You can go outside, and you can still meet people who are in your support bubble but try to avoid busy places.

Try to keep 2 metres away from the other people you live with.

## Shopping

Do shopping online or arrange for friends and family to collect your shopping and leave it outside your door.

They must not come into your home and you should not go outside to meet them.

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NHS Volunteer Responders can also help pick up and deliver your shopping to you.

If friends and family can't collect your medicine, tell your pharmacy (chemist) and they will arrange to have medicines delivered to you for free.

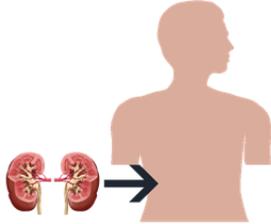
To arrange volunteer support, phone **0808 196 3646** (8am to 8pm), or to arrange online, click [here](#).

If you have problems getting food, your local council can help.

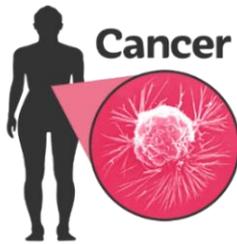
If you are asked to shield, you will get more information about extra support and how to get it in the letter.

## Who is most likely to get very poorly from coronavirus

People who:



1. Have had transplants – like kidney or liver transplants.



2. Are having treatments for some cancers.

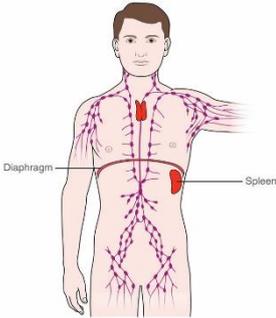


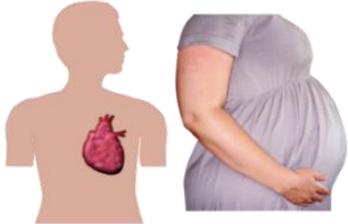
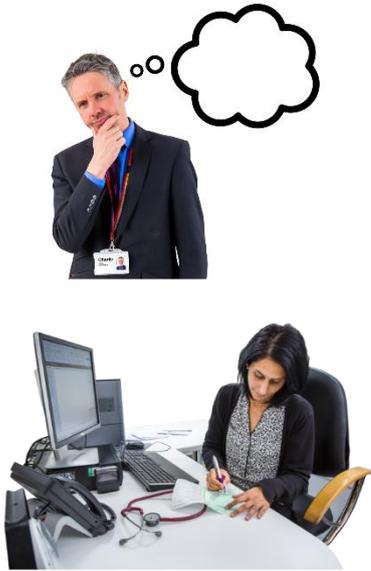
3. Have long-term lung disease.



4. Were born with rare diseases such as SCID that make the body, blood and cells work differently – which might mean they are more likely to get infections.

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	<p>5. Some adults who have Down's syndrome.</p>
	<p>6. Adults on dialysis or with long term kidney disease (stage 5).</p>
	<p>7. Are taking drugs that reduce the body's responses for fighting infections.</p>
	<p>8. Have problems with their spleen such as having their spleen removed which means their body can't fight germs in their blood.</p>

 An illustration showing a human silhouette with a red heart highlighted inside, and a pregnant woman in a grey dress to its right.	<p>9. Are pregnant and have significant heart disease.</p>
 An illustration of a man in a suit thinking, with a thought bubble above him, and a woman in a black top sitting at a desk with a computer and stethoscope.	<p>10. Other people have been put on the list of who might get very poorly based on how experts think coronavirus might affect them.</p> <p>GP's and hospital doctors have been given guidance about why these decisions were made.</p>

The pictures in this summary are from Photosymbols:  
<https://www.photosymbols.com/> <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/pregnancy-newborn-screening/newborn-metabolic-screening-programme-heel-prick-test> and  
<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatments-and-drugs/surgery-to-remove-the-spleen>