



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving  
the nation's health

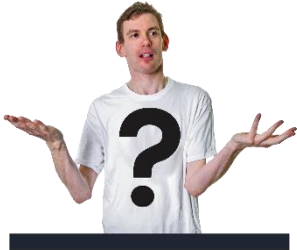
# A guide for people who could get very ill from coronavirus (shielding)

August 2020

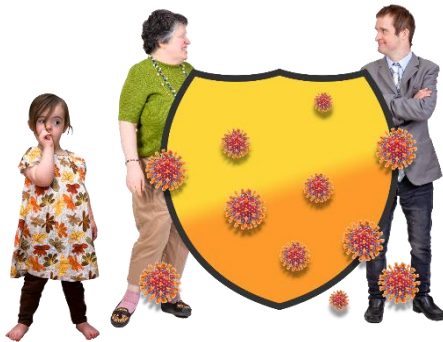




## A guide about coronavirus



## Who is this guide for?



This guide is for very vulnerable adults, children and young people in England who are **shielding** from **coronavirus**.



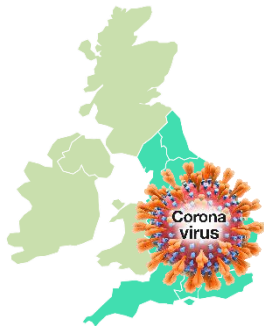
If you are very vulnerable your **GP** or **hospital doctor** will:



- send you a letter



- tell you in person.



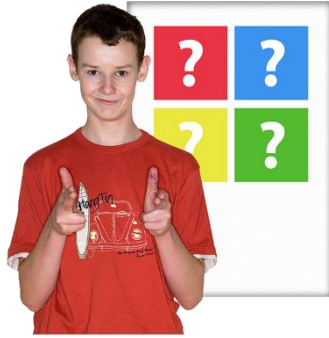
When England had a lot of **coronavirus** cases very vulnerable people were given advice about **shielding**.



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



From **1 August** government advice is that you **do not** need to shield.



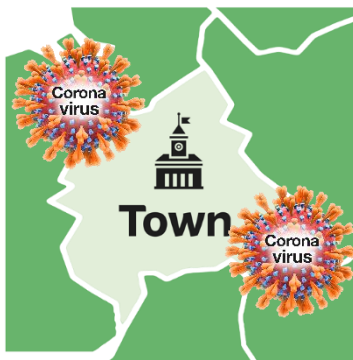
It is your choice to follow the advice.



You do not need to **shield** because there are less people with **coronavirus** in the community.



If there is a **local lockdown** in your area you will get government advice about what to do.

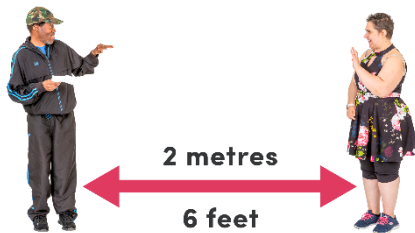


A **local lockdown** is when people who live or work in an area need to follow local rules about **coronavirus**.



## What has changed?

You can go **outside** as much as you like and:

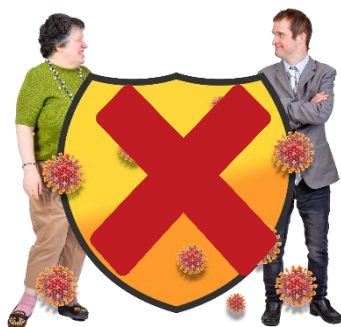


- only meet a **few people** in person



- **keep your distance** from most people

If you are a very vulnerable person:



- you do not need to **shield** any longer



- you should carry on **working at home** if you can



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



Very vulnerable children can go **back to school.**



This is because **schools** and **special schools** are starting to **open.**



You can visit:

- **supermarkets**



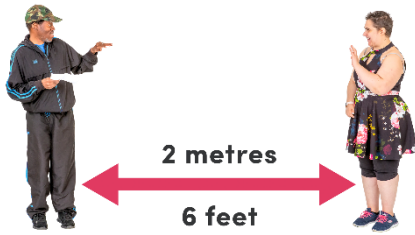
- **pubs**



- **shops**



- **restaurants**



You should:

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



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



- carry on washing your hands carefully for about **20 seconds**



- carefully **clean** surfaces at home or work that a lot of people touch, such as **door handles**





The **National Shielding Service** will no longer:

- deliver **free food parcels**



- deliver **medicine** to your home



- provide **basic care**

You can get:



- support from local people by contacting your **local council**



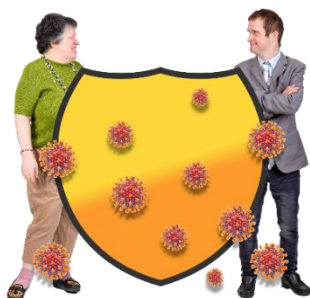
- deliveries from **NHS Volunteer Responders** of prescriptions, essential items and food that you buy



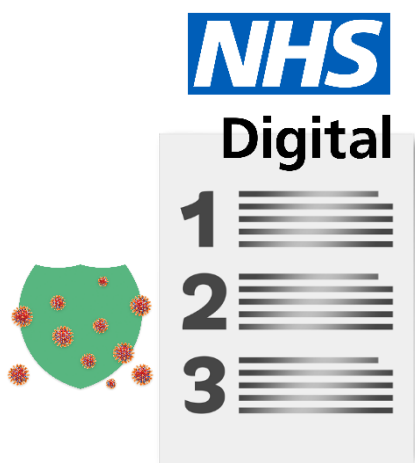
- **priority times** for supermarket deliveries, if you signed up for free food parcels



## What happens if coronavirus cases go up?



If there are more **coronavirus** cases in your local area you may get advice to **shield** again.

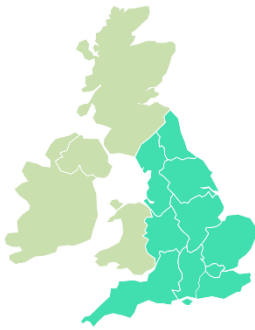


Your name will be kept safely by **NHS Digital** on the **Shielded Patient List**.



If the advice changes, we will tell you about:

- changes in your **local area**



- changes in **England**



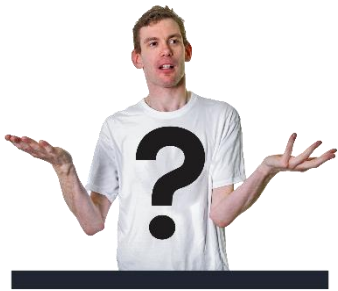
If there is a **local lockdown**:



- you should go to your local council's **website** for more information



- you should **not** visit any areas on **local lockdown**



## Who is very vulnerable?



Scientists in England have told us why very vulnerable people can get very ill if they catch **coronavirus**.



The reasons include:

- how **serious** their illness is



- their **medical history**

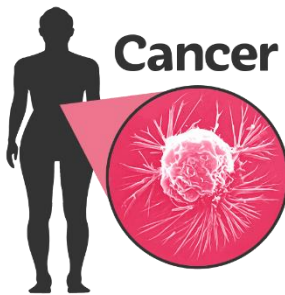


- the **type of treatment** they get

Very vulnerable people can be:



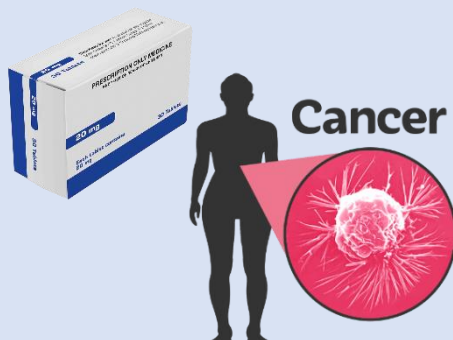
- anyone who has had a **transplant** such as heart, liver or kidney



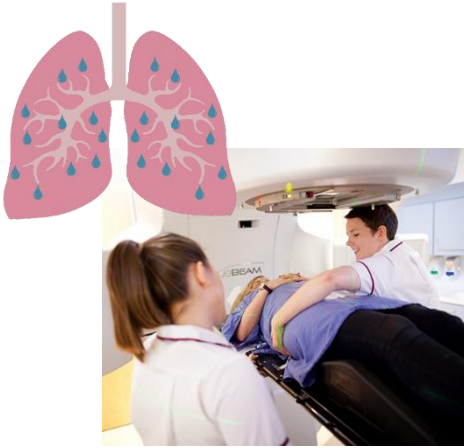
- people with certain types of **cancer**



- people with cancer who are having **chemotherapy treatment**



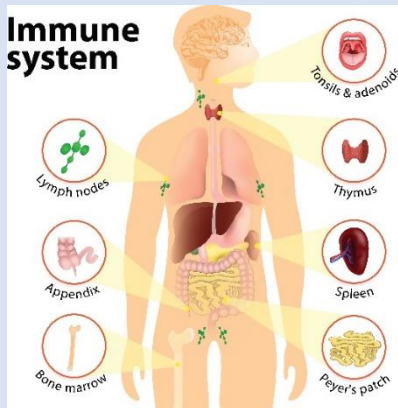
**Chemotherapy** is a drug that treats cancer



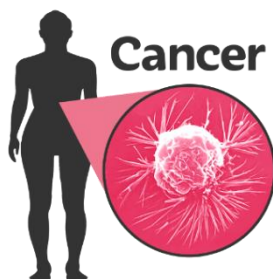
- people with **lung cancer** who are getting **radiotherapy treatment**



- people with cancer getting treatment for their **immune system** to treat the cancer

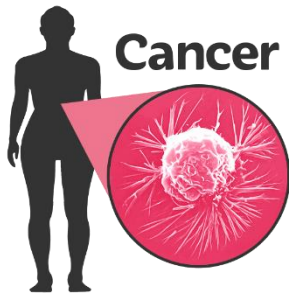


Our **immune system** helps us to fight infections.



**Cancer**

- people getting **cancer treatment** that makes them more likely to get a disease



- people with cancers of the blood or **bone marrow** who are getting treatment



**Bone marrow** is in the middle of your bones.



- people who have had:
  - **bone marrow transplants**
  - **stem cell transplants**in the last 6 months



**Stem cells** are found in bone marrow. **Stem cells** help to repair the body.





- people who are taking **drugs** after **bone marrow transplants** or **stem cell transplants**



- people with **serious breathing problems**, such as those with:

- **cystic fibrosis**, which is a disease that affects the lungs



- **serious asthma**



- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**  
a group of diseases that makes it hard to breath



- people with rare diseases that mean they are likely to get sick from other illnesses



- people getting treatment that means they are likely to get sick from other illnesses



- women who are pregnant who also have a **serious heart disease**

**NHS**  
Digital



For more information about very vulnerable people go to the **NHS Digital website** [digital.nhs.uk](https://digital.nhs.uk)



If your health problem is not listed and you are still **worried**,



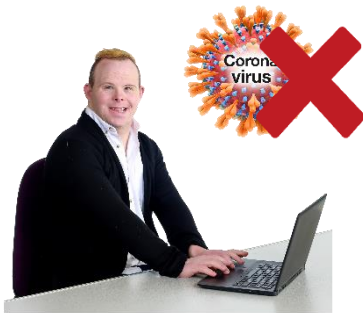
you should **talk** to your **GP** or **hospital doctor**.



## Going to work



You should carry on **working at home** if you can.



You can go back to work if your workplace is safe from **coronavirus**.



You may be able to:

- do a **different job** at your organisation



- change the **days** and **hours** that you work



If you need support to work at home or in the workplace you can apply for **Access to Work**.



**Access to Work** gives disabled people extra money or support so that they can go back to work.



## Your rights at work



If you are **worried** about your job you can get advice by:



- going to the **ACAS website**

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)



- calling the **ACAS Helpline** on **0300 123 1100**

**ACAS** is an organisation that gives advice and support to workers.



If you are worried about your health and safety at work, you should speak to:



- your **trade union**, such as UNISON, if you are a member



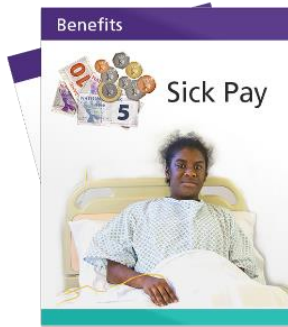
A **trade union** is an organisation whose members work in the **same trade** and work together to **sort out problems**.



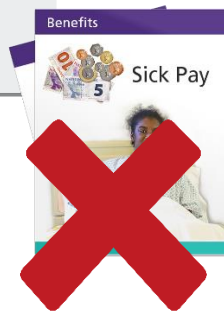
- the **Health and Safety Executive**, which is a government organisation that helps with **health and safety** in the workplace



- your **local council**



## Sick pay



From **1 August** you cannot get **sick pay** because you have been **shielding**.



If you **cannot work at home** your employer should:

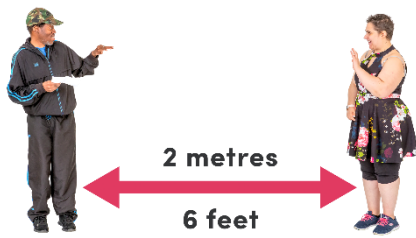


- help you to safely **go back to work**



- support you to **keep your hands very clean**





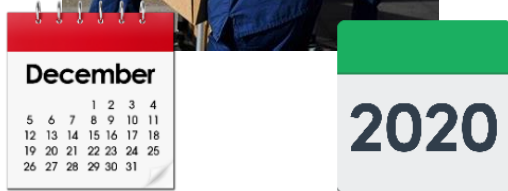
- support you to **keep your distance** from other people at work



## Support from NHS Volunteer Responders



Support from the **NHS Volunteer Responders** will carry on until **December 2020**.



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



- to collect your **shopping**



- to get your **medication**



- to get other **important things** you need



- to get **friendly phone calls** from a volunteer who has been shielding or other volunteers



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



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



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



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



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



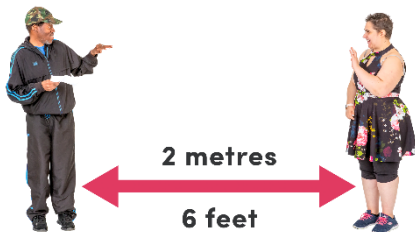
## Support from carers



You can still get support from any carers or visitors who support you at home with your daily needs.

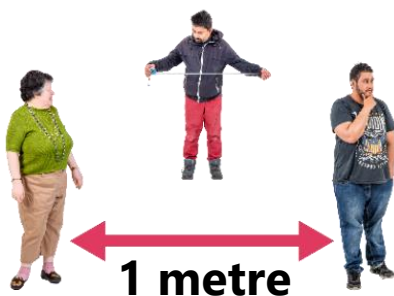


If your carer or visitor has any **coronavirus** symptoms, they should stop visiting you.



If your carer or visitor does not need to be close to you, they should:

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



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



## If you live in a **local lockdown area**

If you are very vulnerable and there is a **local lockdown**:



- the government will write to you and tell you if you need to stay at home and **shield**



- your local council can provide you with an Easy Read version of the **local lockdown** rules



If you cannot work from home or work outside the **local lockdown** area,



your employer may be able to **furlough** you under the **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**.



The **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** was set up by the government to help keep people in their jobs during coronavirus.



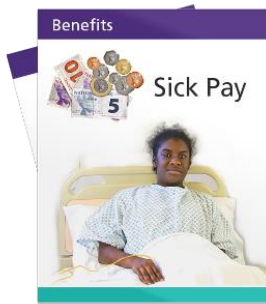
**Furlough** means the government pays for some of your wages if you cannot work because of **coronavirus**.



You can only get your wages paid by the government if you have been **furloughed**.



The **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme** will run until **31 October 2020**.



You may be able to get **sick pay** from your employer if you cannot work because you are **shielding**.



If there is a **local lockdown**:



- go to your local council website for more information



- follow the guidance for your local area



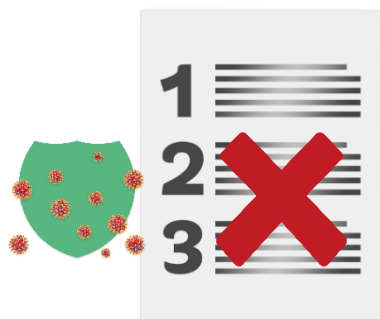
## Very vulnerable children and young people



Experts in children's medicine have looked at all the information about the risk to children and young people from **coronavirus**.



They told us that for most children and young people there is a **low** risk of serious illness.



If a child or young person is taken off the **Shielded Patient list**,

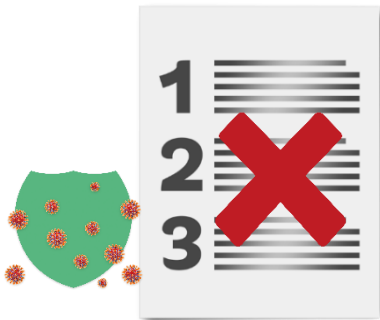




they **will not** need to shield.



Your **GP** or a **specialist** will decide



if a child or young person is removed from the **Shielded Patient List**.



If you are a parent or carer of a very vulnerable child, a **health professional** will contact you this summer to talk about this.



## Annual flu programme



As part of the **2020 to 2021 flu vaccine programme**,



everyone who lives in a household with a very vulnerable person can get a **free** flu jab.

