

Covid-19 – Shielding

Local authority Q&A

08 October 2020

1. Why are temporary measures being introduced?

Due to the increase of Covid-19 cases in Scotland, the First Minister has announced further restrictions with some measures only applying in the central belt. These protective steps aim to control the rise of coronavirus cases and help keep people safe.

2. What are the temporary measures?

From 6 pm on Friday 9 October the following measures will be in place.

Central belt measures

- All licensed premises will be required to close, with the exception of takeaway services and cafes which do not serve alcohol.
- Cafes which do not serve alcohol can stay open until 6 am - 6 pm. In this setting the current meeting rules apply: maximum of 6 people from 2 households.
- Exemption for evening meals served in accommodation for residents – until 10 pm – but no alcohol (alcohol in room service only).
- Exemption for specific life events (e.g. weddings, funerals etc) – which may continue (with alcohol) as per current meeting rules (e.g. 20 person limit in regulated premises).
- Exemption for takeaways (including from pubs and restaurants) – subject to local licensing.
- No group exercise classes for indoor gyms/sports courts, pools. No change from current rules for under 18's
- No adult (18+) contact sports/ training – except professional sports, indoor or outdoor
- Closure of snooker/pool halls, indoor bowling, casinos and bingo halls.

Measures outside the central belt

- All premises may only open indoors between 6 am and 6 pm, with no sale of alcohol.
- Licensed premises may open outdoors, including for sale of alcohol (until 10pm).
- Current meeting rules apply: maximum of 6 people from 2 households.
- Exemption for evening meals served in accommodation for residents – until 10pm – but no alcohol (alcohol in room service only).

- Exemption for specific life events (e.g. weddings, funerals etc.) – which may continue (with alcohol) as per current meeting rules (e.g. 20 person limit in regulated premises).
- Exemption for takeaways (including from pubs and restaurants) – subject to local licensing.
- We want you to be safe. Please think about whether you need to travel, especially if you live in, or would be travelling to or through, the central belt. If you need to travel, follow FACTS and stay safe. Work from home is expected of all those who can.

Further guidance on these temporary measures can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-measures/>

These temporary measures will be in place until 25 October. During this time we will continue to monitor the situation closely, and work with affected sectors to ensure appropriate measures are in place to reduce the transmission of Covid.

We will let you know as soon as possible if we need to make any changes to the shielding guidance. This will be available online and via the SMS Shielding Service. If we were to ask you to start shielding again, you will receive a letter.

1. Am I being asked to go back into shielding?

No. We are not advising people to start shielding again. It is important to strictly follow guidance on physical distancing, face coverings and regular handwashing. You may want to also consider the number of people you are in contact with.

You will be contacted by Test and Protect if you have tested positive or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. You should follow the instructions and self-isolate. Your local authority can offer essential practical support if it's required - for example help with delivery of food and other essentials. A new financial support payment of £500 will become available for workers on low incomes who aren't able to work at home.

3. Why am I not being advised to shield?

Those of you who are at highest risk from coronavirus will be feeling particularly anxious. Keeping you safe is at the forefront of decision-making. We know that shielding has had a huge negative impact on people's mental and physical health. These new restrictions are designed to help reduce the spread of the virus in our communities and are an extra level of protection for you. Introducing these restrictions is the best way to protect you. Please continue to follow the guidance for the general population with great care. We will keep this under review.

4. I'm concerned about these cases, what should I do?

Remember to strictly follow the FACTS advice:

- Face coverings – wear a face covering in shops and on public transport
- Avoid crowded places

- Clean your hands regularly
- Two metre distance – maintain physical distancing from people outwith your household
- Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

To help keep yourself safe, visit our shielding web pages for more information at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/>

5. Is it still safe for me to go back to work?

We continue to urge all employers to support staff to work from home wherever possible. We ask employers to take particular account of those who were shielding.

For those who are unable to work from home, there is a tool available which employers should use to help assess the risk to you in the workplace which can be found at www.mygov.scot/shielding.

6. What about schools?

We want schools to be able to stay open. Closing down parts of the hospitality sector and taking other measures will allow this to happen. It is vital that everyone follows these measures to ensure that schools can remain open.

We have not changed our advice for those on the shielding list. This includes children and young people. This means that children who are on the shielding list can still attend school - unless their clinician has advised them otherwise. Children living with someone else on the shielding list can also continue to go to school.

As with all our shielding advice, we will keep this under review.

8. Will the new restrictions affect the flu vaccination?

No. The new restrictions will not affect people's ability to leave their house and attend an appointment for a seasonal flu vaccination. Both you and your household members will be offered a free flu vaccination this year.

It is important you get your flu jab for three reasons:

1. Flu can be serious and life threatening. Every year thousands of people in Scotland are hospitalised with flu. People with health conditions are 18 times more likely to die from flu than those without health conditions.
2. To reduce the risk of spreading flu to friends and family.
3. To help our NHS avoid the pressure that a spike in seasonal flu would put on top of COVID-19.

9. How can I stay up to date with what's happening?

Sign up for our text message service. If you have not already signed up, you can do so by texting your 10 digit CHI number to 07860 064525. You can find your CHI number on the shielding letters you have received.

There is lots of information which is updated regularly on the Scottish Government website at www.mygov.scot/shielding

Public Health Scotland publish information on their [COVID-19 dashboard](#) including:

- data by neighbourhood areas
- testing numbers
- deaths data
- hospital and intensive care admissions

To access local data on the Public Health Scotland dashboard, select the 'Cases by neighbourhood' from the home page of the dashboard.

To pick a neighbourhood, select a local authority from the drop down and hover over the name of the area of interest – this will bring up data from the past 7 days. The neighbourhood areas presented are classed as 'intermediate zones' which contain between 2,500 and 6,000 household residents.