

**The Scottish Government
Covid-19 – Shielding
Local Authority FAQ
5 January 2021**

This FAQ has been prepared to support Local Authority staff in Level 4 and Level 3 areas answer questions resulting from new lockdown restrictions and letters sent to people on the Shielding list dated 5 January 2020.

Level 4 specific guidance

What measures are included in level four lockdown?

From midnight on Tuesday 5 January, lockdown measures come into place across mainland Scotland. This is to help suppress the spread of the new variant of coronavirus. This new variant is much more quickly and easily spread.

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus, you must stay at home as much as possible. By law, in a level 4 area, you can only leave your home (or garden) for an essential purpose.

A list of essential purposes can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/>

Does that mean I can't leave my house at all?

No. We're not advising you to stop going outside, which we know is good for mental and physical health. You should stay at home as much as possible but you can still go out for exercise and essential shopping or medicines.

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 the protection level guidance for your area and maintain regular hand washing, physical distancing and face coverings.

If you are in the highest protection level 4 and during this lockdown, we are advising you to take some extra precautions to ensure your safety. This includes:

- Minimise contact with people outside your own household
- You should not take public transport, including taxis
- Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping and limiting the number of times you go to a shop

- Shop at quieter times
- Children on the shielding list should not attend school or college in person

How long will we be in lockdown for?

These measures are currently in place until the end of January, but this will be reviewed in two weeks.

Can I work if I am on the shielding list and live in a Level 4 area?

You should follow the updated advice and only work from home. Employers should make sure their staff can work from home if possible. If you cannot work from home, you should not go into your work place.

What to do if you can't work from home

Receiving the letter from the Chief Medical Officer of 5 January 2021 does not automatically mean you need to stay off work. This can only be used if you cannot work from home.

All you need to do is show them this letter, which serves as a fit note, and is called your Shielding Notification. You do not need a separate fit note from your GP.

How do I receive a fit note if I am 16 or 17 and in work?

If you are a young person between the ages of 16 and 17 and working, and you cannot work at home, we will arrange for a letter to be sent to you. This letter will act as a fit note which you should show to your employer.

I cannot work from home – what financial assistance is available?

If you cannot work from home, your employer may be able to furlough you through the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#). The scheme will continue until April 2021. If your employer furloughs you, you will stay off work but get at least 80% of your normal salary. Your employer will also keep paying your National Insurance and pension contributions.

If your employer cannot furlough you, you may be able to get Statutory Sick Pay, Universal Credit, or other benefits. To find out what benefits you can get, speak to your employer, visit [GOV.UK](#), or contact [Citizens Advice Scotland](#).

You should also ask your employer if they can offer any financial support if you cannot work.

I am self-employed and cannot work from home – what should I do?

The Job Retention Scheme (furlough) does not cover you if you are self-employed. Instead, find out if you can get support from the [Self-Employed Income Support Scheme at GOV.UK](#).

Can I continue providing childcare for a family member during lockdown?

Follow the advice for the general population, which you can [find on the Parent Club website](#). You should only use or provide informal childcare (babysitters, nannies, and care by family or friends) if there is no other option. Only children should enter the home of another household.

Level 3 specific guidance

Those in islands at level 3 have no change to the extra advice, although if someone on the shielding list is living in an island at level 3 and working in a temporary lockdown area, they are advised not to travel there for work and use the CMO letter as a Fit Note.

All levels specific information

What letters did the Chief Medical Officer send out on 5 January 2020?

1. Letter to adults: The letter acts as a fit note for those who are unable to work at home in level 4 areas that are now under new lockdown restrictions.

2. Letter to children (age 17 and under): The letter advises children and young people who are on the shielding list not to attend school or college. The letter contains information for carers/parents on what to do if they need to stay home from work to look after a child.

How do I get a access to a priority online shopping delivery slot

If you, your child or someone you care for is on the shielding list and you haven't registered for a priority slot, you can sign up now. The supermarkets that offer this service are Asda, Tesco, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Iceland and Waitrose.

If you sign up for the service, we'll pass your details to these supermarkets to allow them to add you to their priority booking list. Whilst this doesn't guarantee you a slot, which will be dependent on availability, it will give you access to view booking slots further in advance.

Will food boxes be introduced again?

We are not currently planning to re-introduce food boxes. This is because we are not asking you to stop going to shops, though we are advising you to limit the number of times you visit shops, consider shopping at quieter times, and where possible shop on-line.

Since the first lockdown last year, supermarkets have put in place a number of measures to make them safer. They have also increased their capacity to provide a wide range of ways to shop, including on-line delivery, click and collect, home deliveries, phone ordering, grocery boxes, and gift cards so someone else can shop for you.

We have also offered everyone on the shielding list priority access to on-line supermarket delivery slots and this offer will remain open.

As before, it is important to ask family, friends, and neighbours for support. We can put you in touch with your local authority for help in accessing groceries and other essentials. Local officers will assess need and can provide practical support including access to food, pharmacy, social services, emotional support and third sector services or volunteers].

Can I still attend my usual medical appointments.

Yes

I have been vaccinated against covid-19 – do I still need to follow the advice?

Yes. You should follow all advice for those on the shielding list, even if you have had a coronavirus vaccination. This includes the advice about work. While a full course of the vaccine (two doses) will help prevent you from becoming seriously ill from coronavirus, we do not yet know if it will keep you from catching and spreading the virus.

What are protection levels?

Protection levels aim to control the rise of coronavirus cases and help to keep people safe.

Protection levels will be set according to the rate of infection data within a local area. There is different guidance for each protection level. The information on protection levels will be available at www.gov.scot/coronavirus.

Those who were previously shielding should follow the protection guidance advice for the general population. However, to help you make the most informed choice based on your level of risk, we have provided additional tiered guidance for areas like work, school, shopping and contact with others.

We believe that by providing this advice you will have the ability to make the best choices for yourself on a daily basis. To do this you should consider your own health, the number of cases within your local area and seek advice from your GP, consultant or clinician where appropriate.

What happens if I test positive for coronavirus?

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. If this happens, 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.

How to request the shielding letter information in a different format

Other formats of the shielding letter may be available on request. If you or someone you know needs this information in a different format or language, please email phs.healthdata@phs.scot. Use the subject line 'translation request'.

Please include these details about the person who needs the different format:

- name
- address and postcode
- CHI number
- format or language required

Please also tell us if we should send information in this format in future.

If you prefer, you can call the national helpline on 0800 111 4000 with this information. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

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

Sign up for the shielding 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.

View data by neighbourhood: 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 view a neighbourhood from this page:

- Select the local authority of interest from the drop down.
- The neighbourhoods within that local authority will be visible.
- Click on the neighbourhood and it will be highlighted on the map.

- Hover over the map to see data for that neighbourhood from the past 7 days.
- You can adjust the 7 day date range if you are interested in viewing an earlier period.

The neighbourhood areas presented are 'intermediate zones' which is a statistical geography containing between 2,500 and 6,000 residents.