

**Covid-19 – Shielding
Local Authority
Protection level 4 FAQ
22 March 2021**

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

If you are living or working in an area under lockdown, we continue to advise that if your employer cannot arrange for you to work from home, then you should not attend work. The letter sent to you by the Chief Medical Officer during the week commencing 22 March can be used as evidence that you can't go into work during any times that the area you live or work is under lockdown. You should continue to follow the extra advice set out [here](#).

Will I be issued with a letter that acts as a fit note?

The Chief Medical Officer sent out two letters during the week commencing 22 March to everyone on the shielding list.

Letter to adults: The letter acts as a fit note for those who are unable to work from home in level 4 lockdown area. The fit note will be valid until the end of June, however once your area has entered level 3 you should attend work.

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, and updated information about online priority delivery slots for supermarkets.

What to do if you can't go to work

Receipt of the letter received during the week commencing 22 March means that you should not attend work unless you can work from home if you live in a level 4 lockdown area. You can use this letter as evidence that you cannot go to for as long as your area is at level 4. 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.

Can I go back to work if I have received the vaccine?

If your area is currently in level 4, the advice is that you should only work from home even if you have had one or two doses of the vaccine. If it is not possible for you to work from home you should use the letter you receive on the week commencing 22 March as a fit note.

Further information on this can be found [here](#).

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

If you are a young person between the ages of 16 and 17 and working, you can receive a fit note by calling the National Assistance Helpline 0800 111 4000 and they will arrange for a letter to be sent to you. This letter will act as a fit note should you be unable to attend work.

What measures are included in level four?

From 12 am, Saturday 26 December level 4 protective measures came into place across all of mainland Scotland, and as of midnight 29 January this extended to people living in the Western Isles. This is to help suppress the spread of the virus.

- Do not meet indoors at home with people who are not in your own household or extended household. You can continue to meet with up to 4 other people outdoors from two households in total (your own household and one other).
- Pubs, bars and restaurants will be closed
- no non-essential travel into or out of the level 4 area. If necessary, limits on travel distance, or a requirement to stay at home. Exemption for essential travel for work, education, shopping, funerals etc. is allowed.
- Avoid car sharing outside of extended households wherever possible. .
- No use of public transport, except for essential purposes.
- Non-essential retail will close.

As of the 2 April some easing of restrictions will come into effect, the stay at home guidance will change to stay local. From the 5 April, more services will resume such as hairdressers, garden centres and non-essential click and collect.

Further guidance on the timetable for easing lockdown can be found [here](#).

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.

My Child is on the shielding list but I've not been able to sign up for priority supermarket slots.

If you are a parent or guardian of a child on the shielding list you need to register using the child's name. This is because it is the child's CHI and personal details that are held on the shielding list and the system will not recognise their parent/guardian. The sign up instructions that were issued do advise this will be the case.

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. You can find this extra advice in the table at the end of this document.

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 protection level is my local authority in?

Your local authority has been placed into level 4 lockdown. This means that you are in the highest protection level, and that your daily activities will be limited by enhanced measures. This is due to an increase in the number of people in your local area testing positive for coronavirus.

As you are living in a level 4 lockdown area, you will receive a letter which will act as a fit note should it not be safe for you to attend work. The letter will also contain information about accessing priority online supermarket slots.

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.

As you are in the highest protection level we are advising you to take some extra precautions to ensure your safety. This includes:

- Minimise contact with people outside your own household if you can
- You should not take public transport
- Strictly follow the guidelines when shopping and limiting the number of times you go to a shop
- Shop at quieter times
- The Chief Medical Officer will issue a fit note.
- Children on the shielding list should not attend school or college in person

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. This is why we have provided extra guidance to ensure that you are supported in making the best choices for you.

We know that shielding has had a huge negative impact on people's mental and physical health. These new protection levels are designed to help reduce the spread of the virus in our communities and are an extra level of protection for you. Introducing these protection levels is the best way to protect you.

Can family or other household members living with someone on the shielding list go to work if they can't work from home?

Current advice during lockdown measures is everyone should work from home if they possibly can. It was announced on 13 January that working from home arrangements will be strengthened through updated statutory guidance. Working from home should now be the default position for all businesses and services, and only those who cannot do their job from home should be asked to go to the workplace.

Those on shielding list should also follow this advice and work from home if they can. If this is not possible, they have been advised not to go into work and to use the Chief Medical Officer's letter as evidence that they can't go into work when the area they live or work in is in temporary lockdown.

Family members from the same household should also work from home where possible. However, if this is not possible, they can still go into the workplace. It is the employers responsibility to make sure the workplace and duties are Covid-safe. We advise that household members should discuss their concerns with their employer (especially if this is causing anxiety), explaining that they live with a family member who has health concerns and is on the shielding list.

Scottish Government's extra advice for those on the shielding list includes that across all protection levels, we are not asking people on the shielding list to distance from people within their own homes or to stop taking outdoor exercise.

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.

When will people on the shielding list get the coronavirus vaccine?

Local NHS health boards and GPs will invite people for their coronavirus vaccine soon (or will already have done so) if they are in one of these groups:

- residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- people aged 80 and over
- frontline health and social care workers

After these groups have been invited for their vaccine, further groups at higher risk from coronavirus will be invited. People will be offered an appointment as soon as it's possible for them to get the vaccine. To find out more, visit www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine or call the Scottish COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 0800 030 8013 (open daily, 8am to 8pm).

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