

Dear Resident,

We understand from the NHS that due to your health condition you were advised to shield at home over the last four months. That advice is due to change on the 1st August, and we are writing to let you know what ongoing support there is available for you here in Leeds, even after the national changes to shielding take place.

The Government is now satisfied that it is safe for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to the impact of Covid-19 (i.e. the shielding group), to spend more time out of their home and in the community. This is because the national rate of transmission (also known as the r-number) is significantly lower now than in previous months.

**What does this mean for me?**

* **Shopping, Prescriptions and Supplies**

The change in guidance means that it is safe for you to resume shopping in your usual way as long as you can keep 2 metres distance wherever possible and wash or sanitise your hands immediately after.

Many people will wear face coverings while indoors, which helps reduce the spread of the virus, but will not limit it entirely. The safest way to protect yourself is to keep a good physical distance from other people – even if they are wearing a mask.

If you signed up for Government food boxes, these will stop by the end of July 2020.

If you registered with the Government shielding programme you will have continued access to priority supermarket delivery slots for the coming months.

If you still need your medication to be delivered, check first with your own pharmacist about what their plans are. Some pharmacies have agreed to continue to deliver to the door; others will stop this at the beginning of August.

If you are worried you will not be able to get to the shops safely, or if you still need your medication to be delivered, or if you have had a change in your physical health or financial position during the pandemic, we may be able to help you. **You can call us on 0113 378 1877 and explain that you have been part of the shielding group and they will help you find the best options for you.**

* **Work and Employment**

The change in guidance means if you have not been able to work from home, you can now return to work – but only if your employer can ensure you can work in a safe environment. You should talk to your employer about what precautions are in place and agree what is right for you and the work you undertake.

If you or your employer do not think that it is safe for you to return to work, for example because it will not be possible to guarantee a “Covid Safe” environment because of the nature of your work – the Government has put in place additional protections for you to keep your job and to claim Statutory Sick Pay.

**If you have concerns about returning to work safely, you can talk to Citizens Advice Leeds on 0113 223 4400.**

* **Exercise, Social Life, Places of Worship**

From 1st August, it should be safe for you to resume lots of activities you have been advised against doing in the past few months. This includes meeting in groups, attending a religious service or exercising with others. Most places now have new rules in place to keep everyone safe, such as limiting numbers of people, walking in one direction or asking people to wear masks. Look out for signs which will help guide you and keep you safe.

You are advised to be careful about which places that you go to and to manage your risk carefully. Large crowds, indoor spaces or places with no ventilation are all higher risk for you than for others. **So, choose carefully and limit your exposure where you can.**

* **Getting Back to “Normal”**

For most people, shielding has been an enormous disruption to their normal way of life. This means that on the 1st August, you should not expect to immediately pick up where you left off in late March. For some people, being at home has meant not moving as much as usual – so it may take time to build back your confidence and strength. For others, the mental toll of returning to work, using public transport and going in to supermarkets all at once might be overwhelming.

For all, our advice is to **go at a pace that makes sense to you** and seek advice if you need it. This could be from your GP or from the local support services available for you – we have provided a list of useful organisations at the back of this letter.

There are also now a wide range of volunteering opportunities suitable for people who have been shielding. To find out more about volunteering visit <https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/i-want-to-volunteer/> or ring Voluntary Action Leeds 0113 2977920.

* **Staying Safe**

From 1st August the advice to shield will be PAUSED as long as rates of infection continue to remain low. You should continue to take precautions to remain safe. The things you and your family can do to stay safe are:

* Maintain 2 metres physical distance whenever possible
* Wash your hands regularly
* Catch any coughs or sneezes in a tissue or your elbow

It is our sincere hope that infection rates remain low across the country, but if rates do increase again, it may be necessary to re-issue the advice to shield. **Please stay alert for the latest messages that apply to you.**

**Test and Trace**

We continue to closely monitor infection rates across Leeds. If the infection rate increases we may contact you to advise you to take extra care to reduce your risk of being exposed to the virus. We will continue to use the LCC Covid 19 text account that we have used to date. Please note we will never ask you to send back any personal information via text.

There is also a national Test and Trace programme. This programme advises Covid tests for people who:

* develop symptoms of Covid 19 (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste)
* have had recent close contact with someone who is showing symptoms of Covid 19
* are contacted by NHS Tracing to say you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19

**If any of the above apply to you, and because you are in a high risk group you should isolate at home immediately and order a home test kit by telephoning 119 or** by going online: [www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test](http://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test#_blank). You do not have to wait for the NHS Test and Trace programme to contact you or wait to see if you develop symptoms.

Until you have received notification that you do not have Covid 19 you should stay at home and take extra precautions, even from those that you live with. If you feel unwell you should continue to isolate and call your doctor or NHS 111. Remind them that you have been shielding.

If the national Test and Trace programme needs to contact you, they will do so by email, text or phone. Text messages will come from NHStracing. Calls will come from 0300 0135000. We suggest that you save this number in your mobile phone so it can be easily identified.

**Trusted sources of information**

You may feel overwhelmed with the amount of information that is being spread about coronavirus. But it’s important you have access to reliable information. Below are our suggestions of trusted information sources:

* Our web page for shielding in Leeds: [www.leeds.gov.uk/shielding](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/shielding)
* Our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/LeedsCouncil/](http://www.facebook.com/LeedsCouncil/)
* Our NHS Leeds Twitter feed: [www.twitter.com/NHSleeds](http://www.twitter.com/NHSleeds)
* The Leeds Coronavirus helpline: 0113 378 1877
* Leeds Coronavirus textline for deaf/hearing impaired: 07480632471
* BSL SignLive Directory: LCC Covid19

**We Are Still Here for You**

The NHS in Leeds, Leeds City Council and charities and organisations across the city are all still here for you. If you are worried about your health, please do get in touch. Thank-you for your continued dedication to keeping yourself and the city safe during the pandemic. Whilst the Coronavirus risk is lower than it was at its peak, the virus is still in general circulation. Please continue to stay safe by always following the latest advice and guidance available.

Best wishes,

Leeds Shielding Team

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| Leeds Directory | Leeds Directory offers a comprehensive range of services and community based support, groups and activities, in order to support people to live the life they want to live. It helps you live well by connecting you to reliable local services and tradespeople who have been checked and vetted as well as activities and events near you. | Call: 0113 378 4610, weekdays 9am to 5pmEmail: leedsdirectory@leeds.gov.ukVisit: [www.leedsdirectory.org](http://www.leedsdirectory.org) |
| Community Hubs | There are still thousands of volunteers who are willing to help working across Leeds. If you are struggling, worried or just need someone to point you in the right direction – call and they will put you in touch with someone who can help. | **Call:** 0113 378 1877 |
| Linking Leeds | Linking Leeds is the integrated city-wide Social Prescribing service for people in Leeds. Social Prescribing is a way of linking individuals with a range of local community services to improve social, emotional and mental wellbeing. | **Call:** 0113 336 7612**Email:** linking.leeds@nhs.net**Visit:** [www.commlinks.co.uk](http://www.commlinks.co.uk/?service=linking-leeds) |
| Forum Central | Forum Central offer information about voluntary and community services that are available to help and support you, and help with accessing these services. | **Call:** 0113 242 1321**Email:** hello@forumcentral.org.uk**Visit:** [www.forumcentral.org.uk](http://www.forumcentral.org.uk) |
| Carers Leeds | If you are a carer over the age of 18 – i.e. you look after a friend or relative with an illness, frailty, disability, mental health issue or an addiction – Carers Leeds offers a range of support, advice and information for carers and professionals in Leeds.  | **Call:** 0113 380 4300, weekdays 9am to 5pm**Email:** advice@carersleeds.org.uk**Visit:** [www.carersleeds.org.uk](http://www.carersleeds.org.uk) |
| Family Action - support  | If you are aged under 18, Family Action can support you via a range of methods including social media, activities, group work, networking, accessing and signposting to external agencies for young carers and families to gain additional support. | **Call:** 0113 733 9126**Email:** leedsyoungcarers@family-action.org.uk**Visit:** [www.leedsyoungcarers.org.uk](http://www.leedsyoungcarers.org.uk) |
| Mindwell | The Leeds MindWell website is full of tips on different ways you can protect your mental health, whilst staying home. Information is available on the coronavirus mental health information hub web page.  | **Visit:** <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/myself/coronavirus-mental-health-information-hub> |
| Voluntary Action Leeds | There are a wide range of opportunities to help others by volunteering in Leeds including carrying out volunteering from your home. | **Visit**: <https://doinggoodleeds.org.uk/i-want-to-volunteer/>**Call:** 0113 2977920 |

**For more information:**

This letter contains important information related to your NHS advice to shield. If you do not understand it please ask someone to explain it to you*.*

تحتوي هذه الرسالة على معلومات مهمة تتعلق بنصيحة خدمة الصحة الوطنية NHS للتحصن. إذا كنت لا تفهما، فيرجى أن تطلب من شخص ما أن يشرح لك ذلك.

এই চিঠিতে ‘শিল্ড করা’ (সম্পূর্ণরূপে বিচ্ছিন্ন থাকা ) সম্পর্কে আপনার এন.এইচ.এস এর পরামর্শ রয়েছে। যদি এই চিঠির বিষয়বস্তু বুঝতে না পারেন, তাহলে আপনাকে তা বুঝিয়ে দেওয়ার জন্য কাউকে অনুরোধ করুন ।

*Tento dopis obsahuje důležité informace, které se týkají doporučení NHS pro ochranu. Pokud tomu nerozumíte, poproste prosím někoho o vysvětlení.*

این نامه محتوی اطلاعات مهمی در رابطه با توصیه های  خدمات درمانی ملی  به شما در خصوص قرنطینه  میباشد.

اگر متوجه مسائل مندرج در این نامه نمی شوید،  از شخصی درخواست کنید که به شما توضیح دهد.

 قارسی

ئه‌م نامه‌یه‌ هه‌ڵگری زانیاری گرینگ سه‌باره‌ت به‌ ڕێنوێنی ئێن ئێچ ئێس بۆ مانه‌وه‌ له‌ ماڵه‌وه‌یه‌. ئه‌گه‌ر

له‌م نامه‌یه‌ تێنه‌گه‌یشتیت تكایه‌ پرسیار له‌ كه‌سێك بكه‌ بۆ ئه‌وه‌ی بۆت شی بكاته‌وه‌.

*Niniejszy list zawiera ważne informacje na temat skierowanej do Ciebie porady NHS, aby się izolować. Jeśli masz trudności ze zrozumieniem tego listu, poproś inną osobę o jego wyjaśnienie.*

*ਇਸ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਚਾਅ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ NHS ਸਲਾਹ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਹੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰੇ।*

*Această scrisoare conţine informaţii importante legate de sfaturile date dumneavoastră de NHS pentru a vă proteja. Dacă nu o înţelegeţi, vă rugăm să cereţi cuiva să v-o explice.*

*Tento list obsahuje dôležité informácie týkajúce sa poradenstva NHS ako sa chrániť. Ak tomu nerozumiete, požiadajte niekoho, aby vám to vysvetlil.*

እዚ ጽሑፍ እዚ፡ ንምሕያብ/ምዕቋብ ዝምልከት ኣገዳሲ ምኽራዊ ሓበሬታ ናይ ሃገራዊ ኣገልግሎት ጥዕና (*NHS)* ዝሓዘ እዩ። እንተድኣ ትሕዝቶኡ ዘይተረድኣኩም፡ ንገለ-ሰባት ንኸብርሁልኩም ሕተቱ ኢኹም።

اس خط کے اندر حفاظتی پناہ میں رہنے کے بارے میں آپ کے لیے این ایچ ایس [NHS] کے مشورے سے متعلق اہم معلومات موجود ہیں۔ اگر آپ کو ان کی سمجھ نہ آئے تو مہربانی فرما کر کسی سے کہیں کہ وہ آپ کو سمجھا

The full latest advice published by Government is available in English, Easy Read and other languages here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)