

Covid-19: Shielding Q&A – 22 September 2020

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.

2. 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.

3. What about schools?

We want schools to be able to stay open. Restricting 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.

4. 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.

5. I'm concerned about the increase in 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, you can visit our Shielding web pages for more information at: www.mygov.scot/shielding

6. What are the restrictions?

From Tuesday 22nd September, new restrictions are coming into place across Scotland. This is to prevent the further 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 6 other people outdoors from two households in total (your own household and one other).
- Pubs, bars and restaurants will now close at 10pm.
- If anyone is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (in other words, has been less than 2 metres away for 15 minutes or more), they and all those in their household group must self-isolate for 14 days.
- Avoid car sharing and reduce use of public transport where possible.
- Schools and nurseries will remain open.
- Further guidance on national restrictions can be found at www.mygov.scot/shielding

7. What happens next?

We will continue to monitor the situation and will review these restrictions in three weeks' time. The First Minister will make a further statement. You will also receive an alert via the text alert service if you are signed up to this service.

If cases continue to rise, we will not hesitate to take further action if needed. 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 text alert service. If we were to ask you to start shielding again, we will contact you to provide advice and support.

8. How do I receive text messages from Scottish Government?

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 letter you have received.

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

There is lots of information which is updated regularly at www.mygov.scot/shielding including information on case numbers from Public Health Scotland. [Public Health Scotland's dashboard](#) can be used to:

- see where COVID-19 cases in Scotland are growing or reducing over time
- find out more about the number of cases in your local council or health board area by filtering the dashboard's data

We're working hard to create a tool that will help you access data about infection rates in your area. We will update you on this soon.

The Scottish Government also publishes a '[modelling the epidemic](#)' report each week which can also be found through www.mygov.scot/shielding. The first page of these reports contains a summary of the report's key points. This includes current estimates of the R number in Scotland and the growth rate of infections.

Localised outbreaks have now become more generalised across the country with increases in most local authority areas.

10. 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.