

Guidance update for clinically extremely vulnerable 'shielded' individuals

There are around 22,000 people in Warwickshire (2.2m nationally) identified as clinically extremely vulnerable who have been advised to stay at home and avoid non-essential face to face contact (shielding).

These are people of all ages – with specific medical conditions identified by senior UK Clinicians – who are at greater risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

In an announcement on Monday 22 June, the Health Secretary advised that, from Monday 6 July, people in this group will be able to spend more time outside their homes with relaxing of the guidance expected to take place on 1 August.

From Monday 6 July people classed as clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 will be able to spend time outdoors in a group of up to six people including those outside of their household, while maintaining social distancing. Those who live alone or are single parents with children will also be able to create a 'support bubble' with one other household of any size, following the same rules already in place for the wider population.

From Saturday 1 August, the guidance will be relaxed so these people will no longer be advised to shield and can participate in more activities such as visiting shops and places of worship – whilst following strict social distancing measures and undertaking frequent handwashing.

Also from 1 August, those who need to work, and cannot do so from home, will be able to return to work as long as their workplace is COVID secure, adhering to the Government guidance.

Following relaxation of the shielding guidance, support will remain available from NHS volunteers and local councils although parcels of food and household items will no longer be provided. People will retain their priority for supermarket delivery slots, and still be able to access help with shopping, medication, phone calls and transport to medical appointments.

There are a number of ways that those who are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable can access food and other essentials:

- Make use of the supermarket priority delivery slots with seven supermarkets that are available for this group. People will need to register at www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable by 17 July for access to this. Assistance to do this is available via the Warwickshire County Council hotline 0800 408 1447.
- Support may be available from the NHS Volunteer Responders programme and people can call 0808 196 3646 to be linked with a volunteer who can do a food shop for them. A carer or family member can also do this on their behalf.
- If they need urgent help and have no other means of support, they can contact the Warwickshire County Council hotline on 0800 408 1447 to find out what support services are available in their area.
- Use the many options now available for accessing food, including telephone ordering, food box delivery, prepared meal delivery and other non-supermarket food delivery providers. In Warwickshire information on this and other ways to access food is online at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/information-coronavirus/coronavirus-food-supply-advice/1

Cllr Izzi Seccombe, Leader of Warwickshire County Council, said: "It's very positive that there are now steps towards a planned return to a more normal life for people whose lives were most dramatically changed as a result of the pandemic.

"People adhering to shielding guidance have made great sacrifices to stay safe and I appreciate how hard this has been. These changes to guidance mean they will finally be able to reunite with loved ones and begin to enjoy new freedoms. I urge them to do so safely and follow advice to maintain social distancing and undertake frequent handwashing to offer defence against transmission of the virus.

"I would like to remind people that support will continue to be available from the council and our public, community and voluntary sector partners. Our hotline and contact centre will remain open if anyone needs further help or advice."

People in the clinically extremely vulnerable group should continue to access the NHS services they need during this time.

Anyone not already in contact with mental health services seeking urgent help for their mental health can visit the NHS.UK '[Where to get urgent help for mental health](#)' webpage, which lists a range of options that can be accessed, including local 24/7 NHS urgent mental health telephone helplines.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus and details of local support can be found at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirusvulnerable or via the hotline on 0800 408 1447.