

### Letter to People who are shielding

The Government has announced tightening of lockdown measures for people in Greater Manchester, effective from Friday 31 July 2020. This is because rates of coronavirus infection are rising and there is a need to take action now to regain control over the virus, reduce infections and avoid further lockdown measures.

#### **Do I still have to shield if I live in Manchester?**

The guidance around shielding has not changed. This letter is to confirm you no longer have to follow the shielding guidance from Saturday 1 August 2020.

Due to the current circumstances, you should:

- Carefully follow the Greater Manchester lockdown guidelines (below)
- Strictly observe 2m social distancing rule
- Follow good hygiene measures (such as avoid touching your face and regular hand washing)
  - Wash your hands
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Keep frequently touched services clean (phones, bannisters, keys etc)
- Make sure you wear a face covering when in shops and public places
- Minimise non-essential social contact.

#### **What do the new Greater Manchester restrictions mean?**

The new restrictions mean:

- You cannot meet people from other households in your home or garden. Household support bubbles are exempt.
- You cannot visit someone else's home or garden, even if they live outside of the affected areas.
- You can only go to pubs, bars and restaurants with people you live with or your support bubble.
- Up to two households (or six people from a number of households) may meet outdoors in public space with social distancing (not in private gardens).
- Places of worship and other settings with strict COVID secure arrangements remain open.

- Try not to share a vehicle with those outside of your household unless it is part of a school or work bubble.

Here are the latest [Government guidelines](#) in full about restrictions in Greater Manchester.

You can keep up to date with the latest guidance for shielded patients by watching the national news bulletins on TV, listening to the news on the radio and [checking the guidance on the national website](#).

### **What support is available to me?**

Even though you no longer need to follow shielding guidance, there is still support available to you:

- Manchester Community Response Hub for help with food deliveries, medication, combating loneliness and help getting access to services online. Call 08002346123 or text 07860022876 (response by next working day) or via the website [https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/100003/people\\_and\\_communities/7941/manchester\\_community\\_response](https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/100003/people_and_communities/7941/manchester_community_response)
- NHS website Every Mind Matters <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>
- For employment advice ACAS is available at [www.acas.org.uk/contact](http://www.acas.org.uk/contact) or helpline 0300 123 1100
- Citizens Advice Bureau: call 03444111222 or via website <https://www.citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk/>
- Your GP and NHS services are open and able to support you with your health needs

Thank you for continuing to follow the guidance and stay safe.

**Here is some additional information from Public Health England you may find helpful:**

**Why are you advising that shielding continues to be paused in the North West if the situation is so bad?**

Higher rates of coronavirus (COVID-19) have been identified in households in parts of Greater Manchester, East Lancashire, and West Yorkshire. The government and relevant local authorities are acting together in a preventative approach to control the spread of the virus and to stop transmission from increasing further. Shielding is a restrictive measure and we do not want to be advising anyone to follow these measures for longer than is necessary. The measures that have been introduced in the North West now focus on minimising contact between households (a support bubble counts as a single household) and will therefore also continue to reduce the risk of those who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coming into contact with the virus. At this stage our advice is that you no longer need to shield from 1 August in line with national guidance.

Where incidence and transmission rates are of concern, we can take a more targeted approach to shielding advice (at Local Authority level). This means that there may be different advice in place in different areas of the country.

We continue to keep this situation under close review and our advice to those who are shielding may change if the transmission of the virus increases significantly.

**Why is shielding guidance different across the country?**

The government has always been clear that it will continually monitor the transmission of the virus in our communities and, our advice to those who are shielding may change. Shielding is a restrictive measure and we do not want to be advising anyone to follow these measures for longer than is necessary. We review the scientific evidence across England on an ongoing basis. Where incidence and transmission rates are of concern, we can take a more targeted approach to shielding advice (at Local Authority level). This means that there may be different advice in place in different areas of the country.

The government will write out to those affected when advice is changed and are working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that local guidance is available on Council websites.

**Is it really safe to proceed with the national pausing of shielding? Why now?**

Shielding is a restrictive measure and we do not want to be advising anyone to follow these measures for longer than is necessary. Average incidence across the country remains lower now than the point when the decision was made to proceed with the pausing of shielding nationally. We review the scientific evidence across England on an ongoing basis. Where incidence and transmission rates are of concern, we can take a more targeted approach to shielding advice at Local Authority level.