**Covid-19 Shielding List/Vulnerable Patients**

**Background**

There have been a number of calls recently from patients who identify themselves as being vulnerable/in the highest clinical risk group/needing support and requesting confirmation from the practice. To help make things clearer, we have produced this document for our patients (adapted from one produced by Simpson House Medical Centre).

**What is shielding**

Shielding means staying at home at all times and avoiding all face to face contact for a defined period, in this case at least 12 weeks.

**Who is being asked to shield (see list in red)?**

A group of patients recognised as ‘**extremely clinically vulnerable to’** or ‘**at highest clinical risk from**’ COVID-19 have been asked to ‘Shield’ themselves for a period of 12 weeks. This is because it is believed that if these patients were to get coronavirus they risk becoming very ill. These patients have been put on a **National Shielding Register**.

**Most** patients that fall in to this category will have already been sent a letter through the post advising them that they should be shielding. This places them on a Shielding Register If they are on the Shielding Register they can also use the National Shielding Helpline to discuss their needs.

The process for identifying these patients has been formally undertaken during early April 2020. We will continue to monitor in case patients fall into these categories. If you have not already received the letter and fall into one of the criteria as set out below then please call us and inform reception or email [ridgeway.info@nhs.net](mailto:ridgeway.info@nhs.net) They will then add you on the list for the GP to look through. The GP will then call you or send you a text with the decision.

This group of patients is **extremely clinically vulnerable** or at **highest clinical risk** from COVID-19. There is a set clinical criterion for identifying these patients.

**What about ‘vulnerable’ patients not on this list (see list in purple)?**

There is a broader list of conditions and people who are considered to be in a wider vulnerable group but are **NOT** in the highest clinical risk category and should not be added to the Shielding Register. This includes people aged 70 and over, those who are pregnant, those with long term respiratory diseases, diabetics etc. This is also sometimes referred to as the ‘flu group’ as the majority are the patients that would usually be invited to have an annual flu jab.

The Government **ARE NOT** asking this group of patients to shield, they are instead recommending that they follow strict social distancing measures. Social distancing is classified as reducing day to day contact with other people in order to reduce the spread of infection. It requires people to stay home except for very limited purposes.

**What support is there for this group of patients that are vulnerable but not shielding?**

Patients in the above group who do not meet the criteria for the ‘Shielding Register’ may be able to received help from the NHS Volunteer Responders and a referral can be made by visiting <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral>

**What are the next steps?**

We are aiming that by April 20th all patients in the **shielding group** will have either received a letter from the government and / or a message from us.

We will continue to monitor to add any patients opportunistically where there clinical situation puts them into this group.

If however, you feel as though you meet the criteria and have not heard from us please contact us and inform reception either via phone or by emailing [ridgeway.info@nhs.net](mailto:ridgeway.info@nhs.net) They will then add you on the list for the GP to look through. The GP will then call you or send you a text with the decision.

For information I have attached lists of the clinical conditions that fall in to both categories. If anyone has any questions please feel free to discuss with me.

**Who falls in to the highest clinical risk group and would be appropriate for the Shielding Register?**

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
   * people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
   * people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
   * people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
   * people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
   * people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
   * people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

#### Who falls in to the ‘vulnerable’ patient group and should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures?

* aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
* under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  + chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/), emphysema or [bronchitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bronchitis/)
  + chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-failure/)
  + [chronic kidney disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease/)
  + chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis/)
  + chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson’s disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/parkinsons-disease/), [motor neurone disease](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/motor-neurone-disease/), [multiple sclerosis (MS)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/multiple-sclerosis/), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  + [diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/)
  + problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
  + a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hiv-and-aids/), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/steroids/) or [chemotherapy](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chemotherapy/)
  + being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
* those who are pregnant