



4th November 2020

Hello everyone,

We hope you are well.

We wanted to update you on the new government guidelines published on 4th November 2020 for those categorised as being “**clinically extremely vulnerable**” ahead of the second national lockdown which goes into effect on Thursday 5th November 2020.

In **England**, the Government has announced new shielding measures for the “**clinically extremely vulnerable**” which will apply nationally for 4 weeks ending on 2nd December. While only a small number of people with thalassaemia are categorised as being “**clinically extremely vulnerable**”, the Government has advised:

Work

You are strongly advised to work from home. If you cannot work from home, you should not attend work for this period of restrictions.

If you cannot attend work for this reason, you may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit. Other eligibility criteria will apply. The formal shielding notification you receive may act as evidence for your employer or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that you are advised to follow shielding guidance and should not work outside of your home for the period stated in the letter.

If you were on payroll before 30 October 2020, you may also be eligible for the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(on furlough\)](#), which is being extended until 2 December. Speak to your employer if you think you are eligible.

Other people you live with who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves can still attend work if they cannot work from home, in line with the wider rules set out in the new [National Restrictions from 5 November](#).

Socialising

The Government is advising clinically extremely vulnerable people to stay at home as much as possible, except to go outdoors for exercise or to attend essential health appointments. You may wish to meet up with one other person from outside your household or support bubble, for example, to exercise in an outdoor public place, but they suggest that you always try to do so as safely as possible.

Education

According to the government, evidence shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from COVID-19, even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow this advice. Speak to your GP or haematologist, if you have not already done so, to understand whether your child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school while this advice is in place. Your school will make appropriate arrangements for you to be able to continue your education at home. Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.

Travel

You should avoid all non-essential travel by private or public transport. This includes not travelling to work, school or the shops. You should still travel to hospital and GP appointments unless told otherwise by your doctor. If you need help to travel to an appointment, speak to your healthcare professional to arrange transport support with [NHS Volunteer Responders](#).

Shopping

You are advised not to go to the shops. Shop online if you can, or ask others to collect and deliver shopping for you (friends, family, or a volunteer, including [NHS Volunteer Responders](#)). If you already have a priority delivery slot with a supermarket, that will continue – you do not need to do anything further.

If you cannot access food, your local council can offer support. This may include helping you to request a priority supermarket delivery slot (if you do not already have one) or help with shopping. See [Registering for support](#).

Medicines

You are advised not to go to a pharmacy.

You are encouraged, in the first instance, to ask a friend, family member, carer or a volunteer (for example, one of the [NHS Volunteer Responders](#)) to collect your medicines for you. If none of these are available, contact your pharmacy to inform them you are clinically extremely vulnerable and need your medicines delivered. They will arrange this free of charge.

Support

If you need additional help to follow this guidance, your local council may be able to help. You can register yourself or someone else for the [new online service](#) to:

- request access to a priority supermarket delivery slot (if you have already got priority supermarket deliveries, you will keep them)
- tell your council if you need support to follow this guidance, especially if you are unable to arrange this yourself or with the help of friends, family or other support networks
- make sure your details, such as your address, are up to date

You can register now and will be asked for your NHS number. You can find it on any letter the NHS has sent you, or on a prescription. It is helpful if you register even if you do not have any support needs at this time. You can log in and update your needs if circumstances change at any time.

If you need to register your needs by phone, or have an urgent need, contact your local council directly.

Find out what [help you might be able to get from your local council](#).

We would advise all our members with thalassaemia to be extra cautious.

Your life matters and we want you to stay as healthy as possible.

Please follow the government's guidelines here:

<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#cev>

Please find the updated guidelines for the National Haemoglobinopathy Panel here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8ca9bcda00561f349fa870/t/5f9a89c10acba321a760e141/1603963332900/COVID-19+advice+update+October+2020.pdf>

Please get in touch with your thalassaemia team if you are concerned or worried about how this new lockdown may change your service.