****[**Patient Name**

Patient address Line 1

Patient address Line 2

Patient address Line 3]

August 2020

**IMPORTANT: PERSONAL**

**Your NHS number: [NHS NUMBER]**

Dear [Patient],

**IMPORTANT ADVICE TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS**

**The NHS has newly identified you, or the named person you care for, as someone who may be at risk of severe illness if you catch Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19).** **This is likely to be because you have only recently been diagnosed as having an underlying disease or health condition, or started a new treatment,** that means if you catch the virus, you are more likely to be admitted to hospital than others.

Your name will be kept securely on the shielded patient list by NHS Digital so, if the government advice changes, we can write to you and ensure you can access the support you need.

**What is the guidance for people who may be at high risk from coronavirus?**

Those considered clinically extremely vulnerable were previously advised by the government to ‘shield’. This meant staying at home as much as possible and avoiding contact with others. The latest scientific evidence shows that the levels of Coronavirus have dropped substantially across England, and so the national advice to ‘shield’ has been paused.

You do not need to follow previous shielding advice, but you should continue to follow the advice for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable. The full guidance can be found online at gov.uk/coronavirus. This means you can go to work as long as the workplace is COVID-secure, but you should carry on working from home wherever possible. You can go outside as much as you like but you should still try to keep your social interactions low.

In some areas of England, local shielding measures are in place. Specific local guidance can be found at gov.uk/coronavirus. You are advised not to enter any area where local shielding measures are in place .The Government will continue to monitor the virus over the coming months and, if it spreads too much in your area or across the country, you may be advised to ‘shield’. The government will contact you if the guidance in your area changes.

**Support available**

If you are struggling as a result of Coronavirus please visit [www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support to ge](http://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support)t information on the range of support options available. If you need urgent help and have no other support, please contact your local council.

NHS Volunteer Responders are also here for you and can help you with:

* collecting shopping, medication (if your friends and family cannot collect them for you) or other essential supplies;
* a regular, friendly phone call which can be provided by different volunteers each time or by someone who was previously advised to shield and will stay in contact for several weeks; and
* transport to medical appointments.

Please call 0808 196 3646 between 8am and 8pm to arrange support or speak to your health care professional for help with transport. More information is available at www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk.

**Going to work**

You should work from home if you can, but you can go to work as long as the workplace is COVID-secure.

If you require support to work at home or in the workplace you can apply for Access to Work. Access to Work will provide support for the disability-related extra costs of working that are beyond standard reasonable adjustments an employer must provide.

If you need help from the benefit system visit <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/>

**Accessing NHS services**

You should continue to access the services that you need, and you should contact the NHS if you have an urgent or emergency care need.

If you have any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, your sense of taste or smell), you must self-isolate at home and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 – go to the NHS website to arrange a test or contact NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

**Mental health support**

It is normal during these uncertain and unusual times to feel anxious or feel low. You can go to Every Mind Matters (www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters) and GOV.UK for advice and tailored, practical steps that you can take to support your wellbeing. If you are still struggling to cope, we would urge you to speak to a GP.

Further information on coronavirus, including guidance from Public Health England, can be found on the nhs.uk[[1]](#footnote-2) and gov.uk[[2]](#footnote-3) websites.

Yours sincerely,

[Clinician]

[Practice Phone no]

**List of diseases and conditions considered to be very high risk:**

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

1. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
2. People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
3. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
4. People who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
5. Other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions

More detail on the list can be found at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list#risk-criteria>

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)