

Advice to Clergy Required to Shield Due to Underlying Health Issues.

Dear Fathers, Dear Deacons,

If I may draw your attention to recent changes for those who are required to shield for your own information and for information in dealing with others who are shielding. The full guidance is found 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>

Quoting from the document above:

What has changed

The government has updated its guidance for people who are shielding taking into account that COVID-19 disease levels have decreased over the last few weeks.

People who are shielding remain vulnerable and should continue to take precautions but can now leave their home if they wish, as long as they are able to maintain strict social distancing. If you choose to spend time outdoors, this can be with members of your own household. If you live alone, you can spend time outdoors with one person from another household. Ideally, this should be the same person each time. If you do go out, you should take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping 2 metres apart. This guidance will be kept under regular review.

Read further information on schools and the workplace for those living in households where people are shielding. This guidance remains advisory.

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for people including children who are clinically extremely vulnerable. It's also for their family, friends and carers.

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable are at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus (COVID-19). They should have received a letter advising them to shield or have been told by their GP or hospital clinician.

This includes clinically extremely vulnerable people living in long-term care facilities for the elderly or people with special needs. If you have been told that you're clinically extremely vulnerable, you should:

follow the advice in this guidance

register online for support even if you do not need additional support right now

This guidance is still advisory. You will not be fined or sanctioned if you prefer to follow the guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing). You may also choose to remain in your own home at all times if you do not feel comfortable with any form of contact with others. However, careful time outside in the fresh air is likely to make you feel better in yourself.

Staying at home and shielding

People classed as clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to take additional action to prevent themselves from coming into contact with the virus. If you're clinically extremely vulnerable, you're strongly advised to stay at home as much as possible and keep visits outside to a minimum (for instance once per day).

This is called 'shielding' and the advice is now updated:

If you wish to spend time outdoors (though not in other buildings, households, or enclosed spaces) you should take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping 2 metres apart.

If you choose to spend time outdoors, this can be with members of your own household. If you live alone, you can spend time outdoors with one person from another household (ideally the same person each time).

You should stay alert when leaving home: washing your hands regularly, maintaining social distance and avoiding gatherings of any size.

You should not attend any gatherings, including gatherings of friends and families in private spaces, for example, parties, weddings and religious services.

You should strictly avoid contact with anyone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, your sense of taste or smell).

The Government is currently advising people to shield until 30 June 2020 and is regularly monitoring this position.