

Supporting those made most vulnerable by the crisis.

**Guidance for helping those with
underlying health conditions and
those whose mental health has been
affected by the crisis**

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Welcome

This guidance for supporting members with underlying health conditions; those who are shielding and those whose mental health and wellbeing may be/has been affected on returning to face to face activities. If you're in doubt about any of this guidance, please seek the advice of a professional.

Background

COVID-19 has had an impact on all parts of the UK population. This guidance relates to two essential categories but recognises that many more people may be vulnerable, anxious or need support as they return to Scouting.

Some people, known to be at high risk if they contract the virus, have been identified and considered to have to be placed in a 'shielded' group. The UK and devolved governments have identified those who need to be shielded from the effects of the virus include those with certain underlying health conditions. **(See Annex 1)**. For the purposes of this guidance these people are in **Group 1**.

In addition, others who may be at higher risk from the effects of the coronavirus have been identified including members with other underlying health conditions – including pregnant women. **(See Annex 2)**. For the purpose of this guidance these people are in **Group 2**.

Finally, we are aware that other factors have been identified which may make people at higher risk including age, gender, geography, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. **(See Annex 3)**.

Young people especially have indicated in national surveys that they are anxious and fearful of returning to a 'normal' life after nearly three months in lockdown. Adult volunteers need to be supportive of young people across all age groups as they return to section meetings and activities. **(See annex 4)**.

Things to consider

Government guidance on shielding and social distancing differs in each of the four nations of the UK. Individuals must follow the guidance relevant to their place of residence. Leaders will need to have a supportive discussion with their youth members and their parents/carers and with fellow leaders who fall into these two vulnerable groups to explore and agree the best way for them to re-engage with Scouting. This may not be face to face Scouting depending on their individual circumstances.

There is a great deal of support on supporting adults and young people who have mental health and wellbeing concerns or challenges. Leaders and volunteers are encouraged to seek appropriate assistance or training:

- o <https://www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/covid-19>
- o <https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-information-hub>
- o <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>

Risks and mitigating actions for shielding members

Level	Permitted Activity	Key Risks	Key Control Measures	Who is responsible for making sure this happens?
Red	No face to face Scouting activity allowed. Scouting can be virtual (online/video/phone). Scouting at home/with family e.g. using the Great Indoors resource encouraged.	The level of coronavirus in the community is very high and infection poses a serious risk to all members.	No face to face Scouting can take place.	It is the responsibility of each individual member to follow the guidance from the government of their country of residence. DCs and GSLs should ensure that this restriction is enforced.
Amber	Where permitted by, and following, government guidance Scouting activities in outdoor spaces can resume. No residential activities.	The risk of transmission of the coronavirus is much lower outdoors than indoors, The risk of serious adverse effects, if infected, are much greater in the shielding group (Group 1).	Group 1: People in Group 1 might be able to engage outdoor Scouting activity. This will require a detailed discussion with parents/carers and the inclusion in the COVID19 risk assessment about what measures will be put in place to ensure their safety. Group 2: People in Group 2 can engage in outdoor Scouting activity subject to following social distancing and other government guidance.	It is the responsibility of each individual member to follow the guidance from the government of their country of residence. Country Commissioners, in consultation with UK and the relevant Country Headquarters will determine when Amber status has been reached. Section Leaders and GSLs must complete the relevant risk assessment for outdoor COVID-19 safe Scouting and DCs must approve the resumption of outdoor Scouting. Section Leaders should be watching for signs of anxiety or upset, especially among young people.
Yellow	Outdoors Scouting can be expanded, and indoor Scouting can resume subject to following government guidance	Transmission of the coronavirus is much lower outdoors than indoors even at this level of virus spread. The risk of serious adverse effects if infected are still much greater in the shielding group (Group 1).	Group 1: People in Group 1 might be able to engage in indoor Scouting activity. This will require a detailed discussion with parents/carers and the inclusion in the COVID19 risk assessment about what measures will be put in place to ensure their safety. The wearing of face coverings should be considered in these discussions. Strict social distancing rules and hand hygiene should be followed. Group 2: People in Group 2 can engage in outdoor Scouting activity subject to	It is the responsibility of each individual member to follow the guidance from the government of their country of residence. Country Commissioners, in consultation with UK and the relevant Country Headquarters will determine when Yellow status has been reached. Section Leaders and GSLs must complete the relevant risk assessment for outdoor and indoor COVID-19 safe Scouting and DCs must approve the expansion of outdoor Scouting and the resumption of indoor Scouting. Section leaders should be watching for signs of anxiety or upset, especially amongst young

			following social distancing and other government guidance.	people.
Green	Following government guidance, all Scouting activities may resume. Residential experiences and camps can take place.	Risks of coronavirus infection are almost zero.	Groups 1 and 2: Can engage fully in indoor and outdoor Scouting activity subject to government guidance.	It is the responsibility of each individual member to follow the guidance from the government of their country of residence. Country Commissioners, in consultation with UK and the relevant Country Headquarters will determine when Green status has been reached. Section Leaders should be watching for signs of anxiety or upset, especially amongst young people.

Checklist

This should apply to all levels, but if in conflict, default to Amber.



Annex 1: Vulnerable groups who should follow shielding advice

People with the following underlying medical conditions should follow government shielding advice:

- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers: people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer; 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
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

Please follow these links for the most up to date guidance for each of the four nations in the UK:

England: <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>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/>

NI: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/guidance-shielding-extremely-vulnerable-people>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/guidance-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-medical-grounds-extremely-vulnerable-coronavirus-0>

Annex 2: People with other underlying medical conditions

There is another group of people who have been identified as being at a moderately increased risk of poor outcomes if they contract coronavirus. This group should be particularly stringent in following social distancing guidance. This group includes those who are:

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

Please follow these links for the most up to date guidance for each of the four nations in the UK:

England: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tailored-advice-for-those-who-live-with-specific-medical-conditions/>

NI: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-vulnerable-people>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance>

Annex 3 - Factors which may make people at higher risk including age, gender, geography, ethnicity and socioeconomic situation

There is emerging evidence that COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on BAME communities. The reasons appear to be complex and are not yet fully understood. Other underlying health conditions such as Diabetes and Coronary Heart Disease may be risk factors. Because of this emerging evidence, an initial review into the impact of COVID-19 on different population groups led by NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) has recently been [published](#)

A subsequent report [published](#) on 16 June provides more detail about the risk to members of BAME communities. As more clarity emerges from this and other research, people who think they might be a higher risk group should discuss their own individual potential risk with their GP. This is particularly if they also have underlying health conditions which may pose an increased risk should you be affected by the virus.

Annex 4 – Supporting our members with mental health concerns or making safeguarding disclosures

Returning to a Scout meeting may be the first social gathering for many young people outside their family, and in some cases may precede the return to formal education, apprenticeships or work. Leaders and other adult volunteers may be presented with unusual behaviour by young people or may find the young person asking them for help or displaying emotions not normally seen at Scouts.

At all times, leaders should follow the Yellow Card and listen to the young person. Leaders should be prepared to hear an increased number of disclosures, including, perhaps, things that have happened at home during this period. Vulnerable young people may not have had the regular contact with safeguarding professionals over this period and may open up to trusted people like Scout Leaders. The Safeguarding Team will remain equipped to support as before. Group Scout Leaders and District Commissioners should be able to offer advice and guidance in how to respond to these issues.