

# **NHS Volunteer Responders, health care, mental health support, income and employment support**

## **NHS Volunteer Responders**

NHS Volunteer Responders can support 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 is also shielding and will stay in contact for several weeks; and
- Transport to medical appointment.

Please call 0808 196 3646 between 8.00am and 8.00pm to arrange support or speak to your health care professional for transport support. A carer or family member can also do this on their behalf. More information is available at [www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](http://www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk).

## **Health care**

Any essential carers or visitors who support you with your everyday needs can continue to visit unless they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell).

People in the clinically extremely vulnerable group should continue to access the NHS services they need during this time. This may be delivered in a different way or in a different place than they are used to, for example via an online consultation, but if they do need to go to hospital or attend another health facility for planned care, extra planning and protection will be put in place.

## **Mental health support**

It is normal during these uncertain and unusual times to feel anxious or feel low.

Follow the advice that works for you in the guidance on [how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

The [Every Mind Matters page on anxiety](#) and [NHS mental wellbeing audio guides](#) provide further information on how to manage anxiety.

If you feel you need to talk to someone about your mental health or you are looking for more support for someone else, we would urge you to speak to a GP and seek out mental health support delivered by charities or the NHS.

## **Income and employment support**

At this time, people who are shielding are advised not to go to work. This guidance remains advisory.

Those shielding will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) on the basis of their shielding status until the 31 July. SSP eligibility criteria apply.

From 1 August, if clinically extremely vulnerable people are unable to work from home but need to work, they can, as long as the business is COVID safe.

The Government is asking employers to work with them to ease the transition back to a more normal way of life for their shielding employees. It is important that this group continues to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work from home where this is possible, including moving them to another role if required.

Where this is not possible, those who have been shielding should be provided with the safest onsite roles that enable them to maintain social distancing.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, they can continue to use the Job Retention Scheme for shielded employees who have already been furloughed.

### **What support will be available after July?**

From 1 August, clinically extremely vulnerable people will continue to have access to priority supermarket delivery slots if you have registered online before 17 July for a priority delivery slot.

NHS Volunteer Responders will also continue to offer support to those who need it, including collecting and delivering food and medicines.

The NHS Volunteer Responders Scheme has been expanded to offer a new Check in and Chat Plus role. This new role has been designed to provide peer support and companionship to people who are shielding as they adapt to a more normal way of life.

If you are vulnerable or at risk and need help with shopping, medication or other essential supplies, please call 0808 196 3646 (8.00am to 8.00pm).

The Government is committed to supporting local councils and voluntary sector organisations to respond to those who have specific support needs and requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Details of the support and advice available can be [found here](#).

The updated shielding guidance should not affect any social care or support you were receiving prior to the start of shielding.

Individuals should continue to contact their local council if they have any ongoing social care needs.