

## **Covid Frequently Asked Questions for the family and carers of adults with Down's syndrome – 5 November 2020**

### [Easy Read version of Q&A](#)

Adults (aged 18 and over) with Down's syndrome have been added to the group of people who are regarded as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to Covid due to health conditions associated with having Down's syndrome. This means that adults with Down's syndrome and their carers should be extra careful in protecting themselves and follow the [Government guidance](#). People on the CEV list will be contacted by their GP or the NHS.

If you have any questions, please talk to your care provider. If you need urgent assistance, please call us on 0300 123 4042.

### **1. Does the CEV guidance apply to children with Down's syndrome under the age of 18?**

No, any person who has Down's syndrome, who is aged 17 or under is not regarded as automatically clinically extremely vulnerable and does not need to follow the CEV guidance. If children and young people have other health conditions which make them CEV they will receive a letter from the NHS informing them that they have been added to the Shielded Patient List. Their GP or clinician should also contact them.

### **2. How long is the additional guidance to CEV people in place for?**

The CEV guidance applies to the same period as the new national restrictions - from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December. At the end of the period there will be further guidance issued by the government.

### **3. How is this different to Shielding in March?**

The new guidance acknowledges that many found shielding very restrictive and provides practical steps to help keep you safe, while reducing some of the potentially harmful impacts on mental and social wellbeing of previous shielding guidance.

Whilst the government is still advising CEV people to stay at home as much as possible, people can go outside to take exercise or to attend essential health appointments.

There is also no need for self-isolation for others who live in a household with a person with Down's syndrome, although people are advised to socially distance where possible and follow the guidance of 'Hands. Face. Space'.

### **4. Who will the new Government guidance apply to?**

The new guidance applies to individuals who have been deemed to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV), meaning that they face the highest risk of serious illness if they contract COVID. If you are in this group, you may have received a letter from the NHS or from your GP telling you this, and you may have been advised to shield in the past. See the guidance on [Definition of Clinically Extremely Vulnerable groups](#) for more details.

### **5. Are these new rules compulsory?**

As before, the guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable people, including people with Down's syndrome is advisory, although people are strongly advised to follow the advice in order to keep the person safe.

### **6. Should a person with Down's syndrome still access NHS and social care services?**

Yes. It is important that people continue to receive the care and support they need to help them stay safe and well.

Please contact your named social worker or the local adult social care operational team for advice and support. The contact details can be found at the end.

People with Down's syndrome and their carers should continue to seek support from the NHS for any health conditions. There is also a range of NHS services that can be accessed from home, including ordering repeat prescriptions or having a telephone or video call with your GP.

To find out more visit [www.nhs.uk/health-at-home](http://www.nhs.uk/health-at-home) , or download the NHS App. If you have an urgent medical need, call NHS 111 or, for a medical emergency, dial 999.

Any carers or visitors who support people with Down's syndrome with everyday needs can continue to visit them in their home. They should follow social distancing guidance where close or personal contact is not required.

### **7. Does my whole household have to follow CEV guidance if I live with a person with Down's syndrome?**

No. There is no need for others in the household to shield or self-isolate, although people are advised to socially distance where possible and follow the guidance of 'Hands. Face. Space'. You should also follow the new National Restrictions guidance for the general population.

We recognise that social distancing may not be possible for people with Down's syndrome due to their learning disabilities and therefore ask other people working or living in their household to socially distance where possible and follow the guidance of 'Hands. Face. Space'. You should also follow the new National Restrictions guidance for the general population.

### **8. Will people with Down's syndrome be able to go outside or travel?**

Everyone is advised to stay at home as much as possible, but people with Down's syndrome are still encouraged to go outside for exercise or to attend health appointments.

If you feel the mental health and physical wellbeing of the person you care for with Down's syndrome is significantly impacted by being asked to stay at home then

please contact the named social worker or the local adult social care operational team for advice and support.

You can also contact the Mental Health Helpline on **0800 644 101** for advice and support.

If people do go out, they should keep all contact with others to a minimum and avoid busy areas and follow the guidance of 'Hands. Face. Space'.

Everyone should avoid travelling in or out of their local area and should look to reduce the number of journeys they make. Additional advice to CEV people is that they should avoid all non-essential travel by private or public transport, but can travel a short distance to exercise if this is necessary.

### **Support available**

#### **9. How will people who are Clinical Extremely Vulnerable access support?**

People who are CEV, or their representative can use a new online service to register themselves, to:

- Request priority access to supermarket delivery slots (if you have already got priority supermarket deliveries, you'll keep them).
- Tell the Council if you need support in order to follow this guidance that cannot be provided by friends, family or other support networks.
- Update your details, for example, your address.

This service can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support>. You'll be asked for your NHS number. You can find it on any letter the NHS has sent you, or on a prescription.

#### **10. Support from adult care services**

If you need urgent assistance, please call us on 0300 123 4042.

HertsHelp is also available for everyone and will give advice and support on things like getting shopping, advice on money, help with using the internet and how to find a support group if you are isolated. You can call them on 0300 1234044 or look here: [www.hertshelp.info](http://www.hertshelp.info).

#### **11. What support can I get as a carer**

If the person you care for has Downs Syndrome and these changes worry you mean you will find it difficult to provide the level of care and support required or would like additional support then please do contact us. We can complete a carers assessments and look at additional support we can offer you and or your loved one during this period. named social worker or the local Adult Social Care operational team for advice and support

#### **12. What food support is available for people who are Clinical Extremely Vulnerable?**

People who are CEV are advised not to go to the shops. Use online shopping if you can, or ask friends, family or local charities to collect and deliver shopping for you.

If you cannot access food, HertsHelp can look for help in your local area and get someone to come out to you if you are unable to go to the shops or pharmacy yourself. Please call or e-mail them on 0300 123 4044 email [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) You can use our online form to [tell us about someone who needs help](#) or visit [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)

### **13. What mental health support is available for people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable during this difficult period?**

Anyone concerned about their mental health should speak to their GP or existing health or social care team. A national service finder for local urgent mental health telephone lines is now available on [the NHS.UK website](#).

Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the Hertfordshire Partnership NHS University Foundation Trust Mental Health Helpline on **0800 6444 101**.

Hertfordshire residents experiencing a mental health crisis still also have the option to access our team of mental health professionals directly via the NHS 111 service. Selecting Option 2 for mental health services will automatically direct callers to the 24/7 HPFT helpline team.

Mind Network has also launched the Hertfordshire Crisis Helpline which runs 24 hours a day and is available for anyone in Hertfordshire who wants to call to talk things through. Call them on 01923 256391.

## **Work**

### **14. Can people with Down's syndrome go to work?**

If people are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, they should not work outside the home until 2 December.

### **15. Can people with Down's syndrome attend day centres or other day activities?**

If people are clinically extremely vulnerable they should not attend day centres or activity outside of the home (other than to exercise as set out above). If being unable to attend day opportunities will cause risk to the person or mean that they will not have the care and support needs met please, contact the named social worker, the day centre or the local adult social care operational team for advice and support

### **16. Is it safe for other people who live with CEVs to go to work?**

Where it is not possible to work from home, household members who themselves are not classified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable can still go to work.

## Adult Disability Service

Updated November 2020

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	Team Manager	Telephone Number	Office Base
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