1. Core Narrative and Key Stats

1.1. Core Narrative

- **This was a crisis response, so was set up from scratch incredibly quickly.**
    - The policy was proposed by SAGE on 5 March.
    - It was formally announced on 22 March.
    - First food boxes delivered on 27 March.
    - 1.3m people identified by 12 April using national data.
    - A further 1m people added by 7 May through GP and clinical review.

- **Given the starting conditions, the shielding programme was set up very quickly.** Criticism of the speed of identifying CEV people is unfair.
    - There was no pre-existing definition of the CEV group.
    - NHS data meant we were in a unique position to identify high risk groups by their clinical condition, based on what we knew about the virus at the time. This allowed us to specifically target shielding advice at the highest risk groups.
    - We created the SPL and identified 1.2m people within 3 weeks of the announcement of shielding.
    - GPs and clinicians then reviewed their patients lists and added around 900k people by 7 May.
    - This was a necessary clinical decision making process – it was not a delay.

- **Support was stood up incredibly quickly to enable people to follow shielding advice.**
    - Food deliveries began 27 March. Satisfaction was very high (para 21)
    - Free medicines deliveries began 9 April. This was well received by shielding people and charities. (para 3.17 in NAO report)
    - Both of these services were developed from scratch

- **We are confident shielding saved lives.**
    - We know from first principles that following shielding advice reduces risk of exposure
    - 94% reported mostly following shielding advice (para 4.8 in NAO report)
    - We know that support helped people follow this advice (para 4.5 in the NAO report)
    - We cannot say precisely how many lives were saved because there was no control group. A control group would have been unethical and impractical.

4