

3 Jan 2021

Update: reactivating shielding support during a January lockdown

Purpose The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care asked for an update on reactivating wave 1 shielding support for the duration of a renewed lockdown period.

Priority Immediate, in advance of Cabinet on 4 Jan

Structures

1. During Wave 1 we introduced support underpinned by a range of structures and partnerships that included
 - National and local identification of people at highest clinical risk;
 - Sharing of data between partners, including NHS Boards, GP practices, Local Authorities, SMS service, food providers;
 - Setting up a national SMS service for Shielding hosted by NES;
 - A national helpline which diverted calls into Local Authority (LA) assistance centres with data reporting;
 - Close working with Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs) and performance data collection from LAs;
 - National grocery box scheme;
 - Agreement with national retail partners to ensure access to supermarket delivery slots.

Changes and pressures since Wave 1

2. Since August 1, most of these structures and most of the support have remained in place, with some changes:
 - We have reduced the frequency of data updates on the shielding list from Public Health Scotland (PHS) to public sector partners from weekly to fortnightly due to reduced updates to the list;
 - We have reduced the frequency of calls with LRPs from 3x weekly national and 1x weekly regional calls to fortnightly regional calls and ad hoc national meetings by mutual agreement;
 - LA still respond to calls through the national helpful, but no longer make outbound calls;
 - Ending data collection on shielding performance from LAs;
 - An agreement to end the national grocery box scheme and not to reintroduce it, but instead depend on local partners to help with access to food issues;

- £15m flexible funding for Local Authorities entering Level 4 between November and the end of March, to enable them to respond to emergent need, including access to food, etc.
- The £100m Winter Plan for Social Protection, including funding for low-income families, communities and third sector, digital inclusion for older people and fuel poverty.
- We have greatly increased the information available to support people protect themselves.

3. Other material changes this winter include:

- Seasonal pressures on local partners;
- Test and Protect proactive outbound calls and additional support from LAs;
- Support for Covid vaccination programme;
- Support for mass/community testing.

Assurance of local support during new January lockdown

4. Conversations with local partners have provided us with reassurance that the structures for providing local support along the lines delivered during Wave 1 are broadly in place, although the pressures outlined above may impact on the breadth of support offered. These can be summarised as follows (changes to Wave 1 in **bold**):

Identifying people at highest risk and data sharing	The data sharing agreements that underpinned the shielding response during Wave 1 remain in place. We will review the frequency with which data is transferred to make sure it is appropriate to the rate at which the shielding list is updated.
Shielding notifications	A letter from the CMO will act as a fit note to ensure people who cannot work from home do not need to work. There is a lead-in time for issuing these. We expect them to be issued by Wed/Thu this week.
SMS service	The SMS service will continue to provide updates and to allow people to access services.
National help line	The national help line has never been stood down. It remains open and diverts calls to local assistance hubs. It remains a crucial route for support. We also receive regular statistical updates on the types of support requested.
Local Assistance Hubs	Local assistance hubs have remained open throughout. During Wave 1, we asked LAs to proactively contact everyone on the shielding list in their area, as many people on the list would not have been considered at-risk under pre-Covid criteria. We collected data on LAs performance, and by August, 97% of people on the shielding list had been contacted by their LA by 1 Aug. We are currently not proposing asking LAs to

	<p>make the same outbound calls to the entire shielding list in January, as many people have their own support networks and those that do not have been added to LA at-risk data bases. We could ask LAs to proactively contact those who they deemed at-risk during wave 1 (and people newly added to the list) during January; or to run a purely reactive service.</p> <p>Any asks of this kind would need to be weighed against the competing pressures on LAs set out in para 3, as such calls would compete with other services from local support hubs, including Test and Protect isolation support calls, which add to the protection to people who are at highest risk indirectly.</p>
Supermarket delivery slots	Access to the supermarket deliver slots continues and registration has been extended.
National grocery box scheme	<p>Ministers agreed in the autumn not to return to the national grocery box scheme, as support through LAs was considered more efficient and better value for money.</p> <p>£15m of flexible funding has been made available to LAs entering Level 4 to respond flexibly to need emerging from Level 4 restrictions, including access to food issues. We have agreed a review process for that funding with COSLA, which will allow us to reconsider the distribution and quantum of funding.</p>
Local Resilience Partnerships	<p>LRP structures continue in place and are ready to provide support to people at highest clinical risk where needed, although local government partners have flagged that the pressures set out in para 3 may impact on the breadth of support provided. For instance, during Wave 1, people received support for dog walking etc. Additional pressures may reduce support available in some areas to access to food, pharmacy and social isolation.</p> <p>We will review our current SG-LRP calls early this week, and likely reinstate the higher frequency we had in place during Wave 1.</p>
Data collection	<p>During Wave 1, LAs provided us with quantitative shielding performance data. We have not yet agreed a return to performance data collection with LAs.</p> <p>During Wave 1, we derived considerably greater assurance from our regular meetings with LRP partners nationally and locally than we did from the quantitative performance data we received from LAs. It is therefore an area we could consider waiving for this lockdown period in</p>

	order, reducing the burden on local partners without significantly reducing our ability to provide assurance, especially as we still receive data on support requested through the national help line.
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Conclusion

5. You are asked to note on this update and comment in particular on any of the parts of the table above.

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Shielding Division
Irrelevant &

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport		X			
Deputy First Minister		X			
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government		X			
First Minister					X
Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People					X

Chief Medical Officer
Permanent Secretary
DG Health and Social Care
DG Education, Communities and Justice
DG Constitution and External Affairs
Caroline Lamb
Elinor Mitchell
Michael Kellet
Liz Lloyd

Name Redacted

Colin McAllister
Jason Leitch
Linda Pollock
Richard Foggo
Shirley Laing
Penelope Cooper
Stephen Gallagher
John Harden
Alisdair McIntosh

Name Redacted

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