

Message

From: Waite, Thomas [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=9EDCC727F8FD49FE92D238BD2C874D69-WAITET]
Sent: 14/02/2022 10:03:48
To: Whitty, Chris [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=0b3ee62e0ca04e978730b14f9b416a1e-Whitty, Chr]; Harries, Jenny [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=cb41e14f2b234dbeb666d05ef2623bc1-JHarries]
CC: Mehta, Nisha [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=102811871d4a46b88bc288ae8199e593-NMehta1]
Subject: RE: Please don't abandon the clinically vulnerable without even offering us the means to assess our own risks

This also comes up frequently on the MP and (more often) peers calls.

I usually point towards this page of UKHSA guidance, or summarise the key points depending on the question.
<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>

The bullets towards the bottom of the page may be useful for the person who has contacted you (copied below, formatting a bit off):

However, as someone with a health condition, you may want to consider, alongside any advice from your clinician, if additional precautions are right for you. These could include:

considering whether you and those you are meeting have been vaccinated – you might want to wait until 14 days after everyone's most recent dose of a COVID-19 vaccine before being in close contact with others

considering continuing to practice social distancing if that feels right for you and your friends

asking friends and family to take a rapid lateral flow antigen test before visiting you

asking home visitors to wear face coverings

avoiding enclosed crowded spaces

Dr Thomas Waite
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
39 Victoria St, London, SW1H 0EU
Thomas.Waite@dhsc.gov.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: Whitty, Chris <Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk>
Sent: 14 February 2022 09:57
To: Waite, Thomas <Thomas.Waite@dhsc.gov.uk>; Harries, Jenny <Jenny.Harries@dhsc.gov.uk>
Cc: Mehta, Nisha <Nisha.Mehta@dhsc.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Please don't abandon the clinically vulnerable without even offering us the means to assess our own risks

I receive a lot of variants of these, and wonder if we should have guidance we can give to those who were previously labelled as CEV? Or if there is guidance be able to signpost it?

Chris

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]@btinternet.com
Sent: 13 February 2022 18:03
To: Whitty, Chris <Chris.Whitty@dhsc.gov.uk>
Subject: Please don't abandon the clinically vulnerable without even offering us the means to assess our own risks

Dear Professor Whitty,

I am one of millions of citizens who was classed as 'extremely clinically vulnerable' and told to shield at the very start of the pandemic. I'm 65, in reasonable health generally, but with reduced lung function due to bronchiectasis. The instruction I received early in 2020 was simple and easy to

understand. Close the door to all. Disinfect everything that comes through that door, or leave it 'in quarantine' for three days. Adopt strict hygiene procedures at home. Take no risks. I followed these instructions rigorously. But like hundreds of thousands of others, it meant sacrificing any contact at all with my family, including two young grandsons, and reducing my previously busy and fulfilling life to a miserable and empty nothing. I was unable to take exercise to maintain my lung function. I was unable to pursue work. I was essentially dis-abled. Then in August of 2020, those classed like me were told that shielding was being 'paused' and then, several months later, 'ended'. 'Shielders' were now told to 'consider taking extra precautions', whatever that meant. I looked where I could for explanations, but neither the government website nor my GP were able to clarify. Given that I had already sacrificed a year or more to the survival of the NHS and to my safety, and that I was exceedingly unwilling to get shot on the last day before the Armistice, as it were, I felt I had little choice but to remain behind my closed door. Then Delta arrived. No specific instructions for 'shielders' were announced or published, but, in consultation with my biochemist son, we agreed that it would be mad to abandon the precautionary strategy that had, up until then, kept me safe, if little else.

Since then, I have struggled to get any kind of fresh guidance from the government about the current risks that Omicron, or indeed any newer variants, now pose to me. I have repeatedly told myself to remain patient, to continue with precautionary strategies - having successfully avoided Covid for this long, it has seemed beyond madness to abandon caution now - and to hope that in the near future, I would be offered an informed view and/or information that would help me to make some kind of judgement about the risks to me, and allow me to make some cautious moves back towards a life, if not 'normal' life.

And still, nothing. No information. No perspective. No parameters. Instead, it has simply been announced that 'all restrictions will be ended within the month'. We have not heard from or seen either yourself, or Mr Vallance for months. You seem to have disappeared entirely, and your advice and knowledge either ignored or suppressed. I, for one, am angry, resentful and fearful. Am I and the millions like me to presume that the government and the health authorities have simply decided that we are not worth keeping informed? How do I go about making a practical assessment of the risks to myself of 'ending restrictions'. I feel entirely disregarded. If, in practice, you and the government have decided that people like me must simply sink or swim - stay in isolation for ever or take our chances - then at least do us the courtesy of being entirely straight with us about it.

I am very close to the end of my tether. My mental and physical health has suffered significantly over the past two years, and, I have begun to fear, may never fully recover. I appeal to you with all seriousness not to leave me - and all of us - in this ghastly limbo any longer.

Yours in desperation,
NR

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