

COVID-19: Shielding & Vulnerable Staff

Guidance for staff and managers

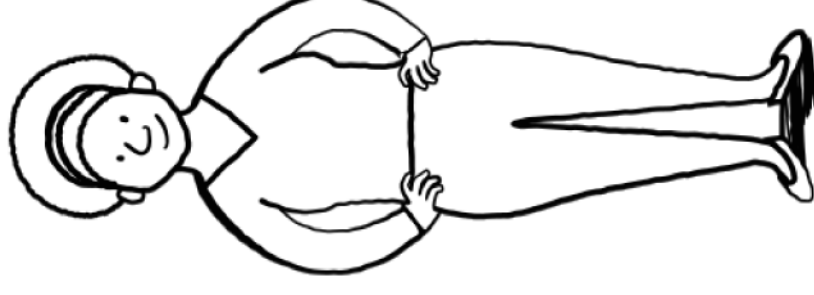
This document aims to provide guidance and resources to support shielding and other vulnerable groups of staff.

You should read this alongside the latest information from [Public Health England and Government guidance](#).

For more information and support on health & wellbeing during this time, check out our [COVID-19 Health & Wellbeing pack](#).

This is an active document

As more information becomes available this guidance will be updated. Check it regularly for the latest information.





About this pack

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the UK Government has issued advice to three groups of people based on their level of vulnerability to the virus:

- Shielding (also referred to as extremely vulnerable)
- Vulnerable
- Everyone else

The full guidance for each of the three groups can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

In addition, people with other underlying health conditions or disabilities not referred to within the Government advice may also be particularly affected at this time, as routine health checks and treatments may be suspended. Usual care arrangements may not be in place and staff may not have access to aids and equipment that they would usually have in the workplace.

This pack provides information for shielding staff, as well as other groups of vulnerable staff, and their managers.



[Complete our short survey](#)

We want to hear from staff who are shielding or otherwise vulnerable, so that we can provide the support that you need now and going forwards

Shielding Advice

On the 21 March, [shielding advice](#) was issued by Government to adults and children who are defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable to severe illness as a result of contracting coronavirus. Individuals with conditions listed within the guidance were contacted by the NHS.

The Council instructed staff in this category to stay at home, and to work from home if possible.

On 22 June, the Government announced that the [advice for those shielding](#) would be relaxed, in two stages. From 6 July, those shielding can spend time outdoors in a group of up to six people (including those outside of their household). Extra care should be taken to minimise contact with others by maintaining social distancing. All adults who live alone or with dependent children only (including those that have been shielding), can also form a 'support bubble' with one other household. All those in a support bubble can spend time together inside each other's homes, including overnight. From 1 August the Government has advised that people who are shielding can go to work or to the shops, as long as they are able to maintain social distancing.

However, the Council's position has not changed, and those who are shielding should continue to remain at home. All staff who are affected will be contacted individually with further information.



Management Support

If you manage staff who are shielding they will now have been home based for many weeks, and in many cases due to the nature of their job roles they won't be able to work. Some vulnerable staff will be in a similar position if their workplace is closed. Offering support to these staff is extremely important to limit social isolation. The information in these slides is to help you to offer support at this difficult time.

Key actions:



Check-in regularly

Ask how they are and whether they have access to essential items and support.



Ensure they can work safely at home

Check that staff working from home have the tools to do their job and remember that they may not have their usual aids and adaptations. Discuss flexible working measures and additional support needed - see our [COVID-19: Working From Home Pack](#) for more information.



Develop a Wellness Action Plan (WAP)

[This is a practical tool](#) which can be used by anyone but may be helpful to guide a conversation between staff and managers to understand the factors affecting their mental health and wellbeing, and the positive coping strategies that help them to stay well.



Monitor absence and offer support

Offer support when notified that a member of staff has become ill. Discuss seeking professional support if this would help, for example: from their doctor, via the [Employee Assistance Programme](#), or via Occupational Health, who continue to operate via telephone / video consultations and provide COVID-19 specific assessments. If they are not fit to work, record their absence accurately on SAP, using the new [COVID-19 absence codes](#) where appropriate. Agree how often you will keep in touch with staff who are unwell and how you will stay in contact. Review their WAP with them regularly if you have completed one.



External Sources of Information & Support

- NHS Volunteer Responders - people who have been advised to 'shield' can get support from [NHS volunteers](#) to help with collecting groceries and prescriptions, transport to essential medical appointments, or simply someone to check in and chat with.
- Register as Extremely Vulnerable - if you've not received a letter advising you to 'shield', and believe that you should have done, you can [register yourself](#) to receive support from NHS Volunteer Responders.
- Local Councils - your local authority will have information on coronavirus and community support on their website. All councils within Greater Manchester have set up helplines for vulnerable residents - see details to the right.
- Local support groups - some [local groups](#) are coordinating volunteers to get food and other essentials for people who are unable to go to supermarkets.
- Supermarkets - many supermarkets now offer a priority service to vulnerable people. Check with your local supermarket for their latest measures.
- Citizens Advice - [lots of COVID-19 advice](#) from [benefits](#) to paying bills.
- Samaritans - getting to [List of specific health conditions](#) and [organisations that can help](#) about whatever is



[Greater Manchester Support Agencies Directory](#)
[Where to get the support you need across Greater Manchester](#)

Help and support with food and medical supplies for anyone living in Greater Manchester.			
Bolton	01204 337 221	Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 5.30pm Saturday: 9am to 1.30pm Every day: 9am to 5pm	
Bury	0161 253 5353	Monday to Saturday: 8.30am to 5.30pm	
Manchester	0800 234 6123	Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm, Sat and Sun: 11am to 2pm	
Oldham	0161 770 7007	Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm	
Rochdale	01706 923685	Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 6pm, Saturday: 9am to 1pm	
Salford	0800 952 1000	Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 5pm, Saturday: 10am to 4pm	
Stockport	0161 217 6046	Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 5pm, Saturday: 10am to 4pm	
Tameside	0161 342 8355	Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5.30pm	
Trafford	0300 330 9073	Mon to Fri: 9am to 5pm, Sat and Sun: 9am to 12 noon	
Wigan	01942 489018		



Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme is a 24/7 support service for all employees, as well as their partner and children living in the same household. The EAP offers high quality support with immediate access to counselling as well as financial, legal, family and medical advice.

How to access EAP

Online Portal - you can get general information and advice about work/life balance, physical and emotional health and wellbeing. Visit www.healthassuredeap.co.uk (username MCC, password EAP).

Mobile App - there is also an app for Android and Apple smartphones and tablets. Search for 'Health e-Hub' in your app store (username MCC, password EAP).

Telephone Helpline - for more personalised information and support there is also a free confidential phone service available 24/7, where you can speak to experienced, qualified staff. Managers can also refer staff, with their consent, to the service. Call **0800 030 5182**.

www.healthassuredeap.co.uk



Login: MCC
Password: EAP



Access to Work Mental Health Support Service

The Access to Work Mental Health Support Service provides one-to-one flexible, personalised mental health support over a nine month period.

The service is suitable if you have mental health related symptoms and are experiencing difficulties remaining in work, or returning to work.

Support is provided by a mental health professional to:

- Help you sustain your attendance at work and perform your job, via coping strategies and workplace adjustments
- Help you return to work if you're off sick and need support for mental health
- Advise line managers, with your consent, about the support and adjustments you need to stay in work or return to work.

This support is currently being given through regular telephone conversations or video-link meetings.

You can receive this support alongside counselling via the EAP, or instead of counselling. You decide what works best for you. Call the confidential referral line on **0300 456 8114**, email a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk, or [find out more online](https://www.remploy.co.uk).



Mental health support in work

Depressed? Not eating? Stressed?
Not coping? Feeling low?
Are you having more bad days than good at work?
Anxious? Not sleeping?

**You're not alone.
If you are experiencing mental health difficulties at work, we can help.**

There is no charge to access the service and applications are subject to a decision by Access to Work advisers.

0300 456 8114
a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk
www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth

Access to Work Mental Health Support Service delivered by Remploy funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Ref R223-Aug11

Remploy in partnership with MAXIMUS



Support for Shielding Staff

Mental Health First Aid

The current situation means many people are experiencing signs of stress, low mood or anxiety. Those identified as needing to shield may feel under increased pressure due to concerns about their health and/or the additional challenges of the very strict social distancing guidelines, such as not being able to leave the house, even for basic essentials.

That's why we're making our [newly trained Mental Health First Aiders](#) available to provide additional support to staff who are shielding. They are now available to listen, confidentially, to any concerns shielding staff have, however big or small. They are also happy to hear about any thoughts or feelings arising from diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health conditions. They can then signpost to appropriate sources of support.

Don't forget that our [COVID:19: Health and Wellbeing Pack](#) contains information for all staff about maintaining positive physical, mental and financial wellbeing at this time. All staff also have access to our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) and the [Access to Work Mental Health Support Service](#).



[Complete our short survey](#)

and help us understand how we can best support staff who are shielding



[Our list of trained Mental Health First Aiders](#)

Wellbeing Tips



Establish a daily routine - it's important to have structured days to provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Consider writing a plan for your day or your week, and having set times for regular activities like a daily home workout, cleaning, reading, watching a TV programme, or cooking. If you're working from home, try to stick to a similar routine as you would when going into work, with the same hours and sleeping schedule where possible.



Stay active if you can - exercise is good for everyone and helps to keep ourselves fit and healthy. [Exercising regularly](#) can also help to manage feelings of stress or anxiety. Do whatever type of exercise you feel comfortable with. There are lots of ideas online for home exercises, whatever your ability.



Have a healthy diet - your appetite may have changed if your routine has changed, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can [help your mood](#) and energy levels. Drinking enough water is also important for your mental and physical health.



Connect with others - maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Lots of people are finding the current situation difficult, so [staying in touch](#) could help them too.



Look after your sleep - [good-quality sleep](#) makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep up good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment.



Monitor mental health and wellbeing - now more than ever you might be experiencing signs of [stress](#), [low mood](#) or [anxiety](#), particularly if confined to your home. Concern at this time is perfectly normal. However, it's important to monitor how you're feeling and take action if stress, depression or anxiety starts to affect day-to-day life. Speaking to someone about how you're feeling is often the first step. This could be a family member or friend, colleague or manager, [Mental Health First Aider](#), or via our [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

For more information, check out the [Health & wellbeing pack](#)

Additional Packs for more information

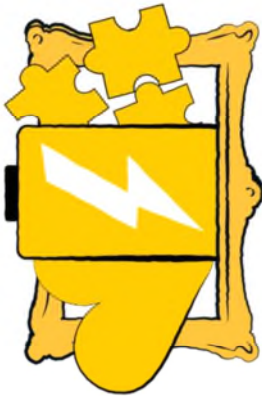
[Health & Wellbeing Pack](#)



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Health & Wellbeing

COVID-19 Support Pack



You should read this alongside the latest information from [Public Health England and Government guidance](#).

In addition, you can refer to [COVID-19 Working from Home Pack](#) which contains important information for staff and managers about working from home.

This is an active document
As more information becomes available this guidance will be updated. Check it regularly for the latest information.

Information is correct at time of publication : 24 April 2020

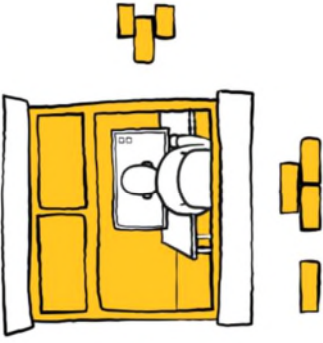
[Working from Home Pack](#)



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Our Ways of Working

Working from Home



This pack is intended to provide you and your manager with guidance around working from home, for a prolonged period, given recent developments with COVID-19.

You should read this alongside the latest information from [Public Health England and Government guidance](#).

For more information and support on health & wellbeing during this time, check out our [COVID-19 Health & Wellbeing pack](#). In addition, you can refer to [COVID-19 Working from Home](#)

This is an active document
As more information becomes available this guidance will be updated. Check it regularly for the latest information.

Information is correct at time of publication : 27 March 2020