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[Patient Name]

Patient address Line 1
Patient address Line 2
Patient address Line 3]

7 April 2020

IMPORTANT: PERSONAL

Your Community Health Index (CHI) number: [CHI NUMBER]

UPDATE ON KEEPING SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS

Dear [Patient],

I hope you are keeping well in these challenging times. You've been sent this letter because you, or a person you're caring for, is shielding at home due to high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. This letter provides a reminder of the steps you need to take to keep yourself safe. It also lets you know about how you can get the food or household items you need, including if you do not have a mobile phone, and other support that can be offered.

Reminder - how to keep yourself safe by shielding at home

You should have already had a letter that explained you:

- must stay at home for at least 12 weeks
- avoid as much face to face contact as you can
- should join the SMS Shielding Service for information and support. This now includes priority access to supermarket deliveries

Getting support to you and others

It's important that you join the SMS Shielding Service or contact your local council's support phone line. We need to be able to check that everyone who's shielding is getting the support they need.

If you do not want support, you should still get in touch to let us know by contacting your local council's support line. This will help us focus on those who need support.

Your local council's support phone number is listed at the end of this letter.

If you need help to get the food or household items you need

If you buy online, or have someone who's able to get the food and household items you need, you should carry on getting things in this way.

If you're not able to get these things, we can send you free grocery packs.

How to get free weekly grocery packs if you have a mobile phone

Step 1: join the SMS Shielding Service, if you have not already

You can join the SMS Shielding Service by sending a text from your mobile phone to 0786 006 4525. The text you send should only include your CHI number. Your CHI number is the ten-digit number shown towards the top of this letter. It is an automated system, so to get the most effective service please do not add extra information.

Once we've got your CHI number, we'll send you a text to confirm that you've joined the service.

Please note the 0786 006 4525 number only accepts text messages. It does not take voice calls.

Step 2: Text us to get a free weekly grocery pack

To get a free weekly grocery pack text **1BOX** to 0786 006 4525. This is all you should include in the text. If you and someone else in your household both need a grocery pack and you have no means of getting groceries, text **2BOX** instead.

Your first pack will take up to a week to arrive from the day you send the text. After that, you'll get your free pack once a week.

You can stop the service at any time by texting **STOPBOX** to 0786 006 4525.

If you do not have a mobile phone and need a free grocery pack

If you cannot join the SMS Shielding Service, you can phone your local council's support line for free weekly grocery packs. You can also call about any other help that you need.

New ways we'll be able to help you in the future

You'll soon be able to get access to:

- home delivery slots from local supermarkets for online orders, reserved only for people who are shielding.
- a new national telephone number, launching shortly, to help give you advice and support – this number will put you quickly in touch with local support in your area, run by your local council
- support with getting access to the internet, if you do not have access at the moment or need help using online services

Priority access to supermarket deliveries

We're working with the biggest supermarkets in Scotland, such as Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury and Morrisons, to make sure you're first in line when it comes to getting a home delivery. You'll pay for these groceries, but having a guaranteed delivery slot will allow you to choose what you want each week.

The simplest way to find out more about this service is to make sure you've joined the SMS Shielding Service. As soon as we can, we'll contact you using the SMS Shielding Service with details of how to get priority supermarket deliveries.

Even when this service is launched, you'll still be able to carry on getting free grocery packs, if you need them.

Get help online

You can find the latest online health advice on NHS Inform at www.nhsinform.scot .

For the latest Scottish Government updates on coronavirus, visit gov.scot or mygov.scot.

We are determined to make sure you receive the support you need at this time.

Yours sincerely,

John Swinney

General help & support for those at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus

Shielding and staying safe – why it's not the same as advice to other people

Because you're in a high risk group, you need to stay at home and avoid as much face to face contact as you can.

You should try and stay at least 2 metres away from people, including those you live with, and everyone in your household should follow advice about regular hand washing.

You can go out into your garden or step out onto your doorstep for fresh air, so long as you stay at least 2 metres away from other people.

We know this advice is hard to follow, and is not the same as advice to people in lower risk groups, but it's advice you need to follow to protect your health and the NHS.

Other people who live with you

Other people in your household do not have to shield themselves at home for 12 weeks. This means that if they have to leave the house to go to work, such as if they're a key worker, they can carry on doing so. However, to help keep you safe, they must follow guidance on social distancing and reducing their contact outside the home where they can.

In your home, you should:

- minimise the time you spend with others in shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom and sitting areas) and keep any shared spaces well ventilated
- aim to keep 2 metres away from others and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible
- use separate towels and, if possible, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household or, if this is not possible, clean the bathroom with cleaning products after every use
- avoid using the kitchen when others are present, take your meals back to your room to eat where possible, and ensure all kitchenware is cleaned thoroughly, using a dishwasher set to 60 degrees if you can, or in very warm, soapy water

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance to help keep you safe, there is no need for them to wear any special medical clothing or equipment.

How long you'll be able to get support from the SMS Shielding Service

You'll be able to access the SMS Shielding Service for as long as you're advised you need to stay at home. At the moment, this is for at least 12 weeks from the date you got your first letter asking you to stay at home.

You'll get updates from the SMS Shielding Service if the length you're advised to stay at home changes.

If you need to speak to someone to ask a question

You can contact your local council's support line.

What's in a free grocery pack

Your free grocery pack will include enough basic food and household items to last a week. At the moment, everyone will get the same grocery pack, so it might not meet your personal dietary and religious needs.

Over the coming weeks, we'll try to offer packs to better meet dietary and religious needs. You'll get an update on this as soon as we can give one.

This is what's currently in the standard grocery pack:

Product	Quantity
Coffee	1x50g
Tea bags	40 bags
Biscuits	1x300g
Bread	1x800g
Cereal	1x500g
Baked Beans	2x415g
Soups	4x400g
Pasta	1x500g
Rice / Cous Cous/ Noodles	1 x 500g
Fruit 1	1x5 count
Fruit 2	1x5 count
Shower Gel	1xunit
Semi-skimmed UHT MILK.	2x1ltr
Cooking Sauce - jar	1x350g
Pre potato (whole, washed)	1x2kg
Tinned Meat	1x340g
Tuna	1x145g
Veg (peas probably)	2x300g
Chopped Tomatoes	2x400g

Tinned Fruit	1x410g
Toilet Roll	2xroll

Your grocery pack will normally be delivered to your door by Brakes or Bidfood. Sometimes, your local council, a supermarket, charity or emergency service may also make the delivery.

Whoever delivers your pack will leave it outside your door. This means that they will let you know they're at the door by ringing a bell or knocking, but will then step away to a safe distance. If there is no answer then they will post a card through your door.

If you're worried that you should have had a grocery pack and it's not been delivered, contact your local council's support line.

If you cannot lift the grocery pack to bring it in from outside, you may need to bring items inside a few at a time. You can also try your local council's support line to see if they can help you bring your pack inside.

If the address you're living at is different to the one on this letter

If you want your grocery pack delivered to an address that isn't the same as the one on this letter, you need to contact your local council's support line to give them your new address.

When you can expect a grocery pack

If you've asked to get a weekly grocery pack, it may take up to a week to reach you. After this, deliveries will be made once a week on the same day every week. Delivery times are between 6am - 10pm.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus

If it's an emergency, whether related to the coronavirus or not, phone 999.

If, at any point, you think you have developed symptoms of coronavirus, such as a new, continuous cough and/or a high temperature (above 37.8 °C), phone the NHS on 111. Because you're in a high risk group, you should call 111 if you get any symptoms of coronavirus.

If you are currently within 6 weeks of having received chemotherapy or radiotherapy for a cancer (including a blood cancer), and feel unwell, whether or not you think it might be the coronavirus infection, then you should phone the emergency Scottish Cancer Treatment Helpline number 0800 917 7711, or the emergency number given to you by your consultant or specialist nurse. You should do this whether you think you have Covid-19 or are unwell in any other way, just as you would have done before this Covid-19 epidemic.

Prescriptions

Your local pharmacy should be sending you any prescription medicines that you need. Your prescriptions should also cover the same length of time as usual. If you do not have your prescription medicines sent to you, or want someone you know to pick them up, you can arrange this by:

- asking someone you know to pick them up and to leave them at your door (this is the best option, if possible)
- contacting your local council's support line - they will be able to arrange for your medicines to be delivered to your home

If you get medicines or equipment from your hospital care team, they will arrange to have these delivered to you.