

Protecting the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)

You have received this leaflet as you've been identified as being Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and are at increased risk of coronavirus. Please spare some time to read our guide, which explains recent changes to the shielding list, explains what this means for you, and provides information about what help might be available to you during this difficult time.

Changes to shielding list - Last week, 1.7 million more people were added to the government's COVID-19 shielding list in England. This adds to the 2.3 million people already classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and are shielding. The changes have arisen due to a new predictive risk model which has helped clinicians identify adults with multiple risk factors that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.

What this means for you - You have been identified as CEV, which means you are advised to stay at home and only leave the house to exercise and attend medical appointments. These shielding arrangements are in place until 31 March 2021.

- Don't meet socially with people you do not live with unless they are part of your support bubble.
- Try to stay two metres away from those you live with, especially if they display symptoms of the virus or have been advised to self-isolate.
- Avoid going out for groceries and use online shopping if possible. You can ask others to collect and deliver shopping or medicines for you.
- Please see our section about exercising.
- Follow the hands-face-space rules.
- You can receive care at home from social care workers and medical professionals, and informal care from people within your support bubble.
- Non-emergency work by contractors in your home should be undertaken at your discretion and precautions should be taken to prevent infection (e.g. wearing masks and hand sanitising). No work should be undertaken in a household that's self-isolating unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household or the public.
- If you are unable to work in your normal job role from home, you should check with your employer if they are considering using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough), which has been extended to 30 April 2021.

Help is available to those who are shielding

Help is available with shopping and prescription collection from the Bracknell Forest Community Response in partnership with The Ark:

☎ 01344 266911

✉ community@theark.org.uk

💻 www.theark.org.uk/covid-19-community-response

Foodbanks

If you are having financial difficulties and are unable to pay for food, local foodbanks may be able to help you.

Bracknell Foodbank:

✉ foodbank@kerith.church

☎ 01344 862699 or 07923 400138

💻 www.bracknell.foodbank.org.uk

Crowthorne Foodbank:

✉ info@crowthorne.foodbank.org.uk

☎ 01344 780087

💻 www.crowthorne.foodbank.org.uk

Financial worries

Housing benefit and council tax discount

✉ benefits@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

☎ 01344 352010

💻 www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/benefits

Support via your energy supplier

If you are concerned about paying for energy bills, particularly over winter, there is support available for this via your energy supplier.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you can request to be added to Priority Services Registers held by energy suppliers for additional support. The support available varies depending on the supplier but can include:

- accessible billing
- safety measures when someone from the energy supplier needs to enter your home
- pausing debt repayments
- stopping disconnections
- sending prepayment top ups if you cannot leave the house

Further information about how to be added to the register and the additional services your supplier can provide you is available via Ofgem:

💻 www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register

COVID Winter Grant Scheme

Aimed at families and children who have been hardest hit by the pandemic and are having trouble with the cost of food and utility bills. You can apply for this scheme until Friday 9 April 2021.

 www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-and-support/support-residents/covid-winter-grant-scheme

 01344 352010

Citizens Advice Bracknell and District

A local charity providing free, independent, impartial, and confidential advice on a range of issues, including finance, legal, employment and housing.

 www.citizensadvicebracknell.org.uk

 03 444 111 306 (this is not a Bracknell area code)

Mental health and loneliness

Looking after your mental health during lockdown is essential. If you feel you are struggling with mental health issues, there is help available. Anyone concerned about their mental health should speak to their GP or existing care team or can access further advice via NHS.UK. Online self-referral options are commonly available for some services, including children and young people's mental health services, and psychological therapies services for adults with common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

Mental health trusts in England have been instructed to put in place 24/7 crisis lines for all ages so people can get urgent help whenever they need it. If you or someone you care for are experiencing a mental health crisis, we urge you to contact a local health professional immediately.

Useful contacts

NHS Every Mind Matters:

 www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

Support is available via the community mental health team:

 www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/community-mental-health-team-cmht

Talking Therapies help:

 0300 365 0300

 <https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk>

If you need urgent help, but it's not an emergency, you can contact the Mental Health Crisis Team:

 0300 365 9999

 www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/contact-us/i-need-help-now

If there is an emergency, please call 999.

Social prescribers

The council's social prescribers can support people who are feeling lonely and socially isolated. They can help you to stay connected by helping you find community groups and activities to try. They can also give you information and guidance, support with practical issues including access to online resources, and help you to identify home based activities and goal setting.

To speak to a social prescriber or make an online self-referral visit:

 <https://health.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/social-prescription>

 01344 352000 (Bracknell Forest Council customer services)

Exercise

You can exercise in an outdoor public place, providing you stick to the rules i.e. stay local, socially distanced, and exercise by yourself or with one person from another household/support bubble.

Further information on how you can keep fit and healthy is available at:

 www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-exercises

COVID-19 information

The latest COVID-19 data, testing and vaccination information is available from Public Health Berkshire:

 www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk

Stay at home lockdown guidance:

 www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home

Research behind newly identified new at risk group:

 <http://bit.ly/At-Risk-Groups-News>

Guidance on shielding:

 <http://bit.ly/Guidance-On-Shielding>

If you need this leaflet in an alternative format, please contact the Bracknell Forest Community Response Team on 01344 351187.