**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is the change?**

From Thursday 18 June 2020, the advice for people that have been asked to shield is:

* You can go outside to exercise or be active
* You cannot enter other indoor areas
* Strict physical distancing and hand hygiene is strongly advised

From Friday 19 June 2020, the advice for people that have been asked to shield is:

* You can take part in non-contact outdoor activities such as golf, hiking, canoeing, outdoor swimming, fishing etc.
* You can meet one other household per day outdoors, as long as there are no more than 8 people in the group
* You cannot go inside other buildings or meet other people inside

It is really important that you keep a physical distance of two metres from others and practise strict hand hygiene.

There is **no** change to the support offered to those who are shielding. If you have been getting support or food deliveries this will continue until at least 31 July.

**Does this apply to everyone who has been advised to shield?**

This advice applies to most people of all ages who are shielding, including children and pregnant women.

It also applies to those shielding because they are waiting on an organ transplant. Those who are shielding **and** awaiting a solid organ transplant are advised to strictly follow this advice and contact their transplant team to discuss whether specific recommendations in addition to this updated advice should be in place for them.

However, this advice does **not** apply to those who live in a residential nursing or care home.

**Why has this change been made now?**

When we were first faced with Covid-19, we knew very little about how likely it was to spread and who might be most at risk. Now that we have much more information, we can give more informed advice.

Firstly, we now know that the risks from being outside and catching the virus that causes Covid-19 are very low indeed. This is because studies have shown daylight kills the virus very quickly, within minutes. So the chance of getting the infection from objects outside that have been touched by somebody else is very small.

Secondly, we have been monitoring the number of cases of Covid-19 within the community. This number has been dropping steadily over the last 4 weeks, which means the number of people who are infectious is very low. Both these factors have allowed us to recommend this change, which will be of benefit to mental and physical health and wellbeing.

**How long can I stay outside?**

There is no time limit for how long people can stay outside. The important thing is to stay two metres away from other people and avoid crowded places or busy times. You should always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you return indoors.

**What can I do outside?**

You can do whatever level of exercise feels comfortable for you. It is important to consider that if you have not been exercising for the last few months you may wish to take things slowly at first.

We advise that:

* from Thursday 18 June, you can go outdoors for a walk, wheel, run or cycle
* from Friday 19 June, you can take part in non-contact outdoor activities such as golf, hiking, canoeing, outdoor swimming, fishing, etc.
* should try to maintain strict physical distancing at all times, even if you live with the person you’re out with. This means keeping 2 metres (or 3 steps) away from other people at all times
* should try to choose times and areas that are quiet
* wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get back home

**How far can I go outside?**

The Scottish government is asking people to stay within their local area (broadly within 5 miles) for the purposes of exercise and leisure. This is the same for people who have been asked to shield. You can travel in a car, either driving yourself or being driven by someone you live with. Do not go in a car with people you do not live with.

**Why is the advice to keep 2 metres apart from others?**

The main route of transmission of Covid-19 is from droplets spread from an infected person when they cough. Studies have shown that the risk of getting the infection from such droplets is very small if you are 2 metres or more away, as they will have fallen to the ground before they reach you. This is why general advice has been to allow groups of no more than 8 to meet up outside while staying 2 metres apart.

**Does this advice apply to children and young people?**

Yes. The advice should be followed in a way which is right for the age of your child or young person. It is important that there should be supervision, if needed, from a parent or a carer to make sure physical distancing is followed. Please make sure they wash their hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as they come back in.

**Can I go shopping or to the chemist?**

No, at the moment the guidance is still that you cannot go inside other buildings. The virus can survive much longer indoors which is why we are limiting the advice to being outdoors.

**Can I go back to work?**

Unless you can work from home, we advise that you should not be going into work at the moment. It is important that people who have been asked to shield stay 2 metres away from other people and do not go inside any other buildings.

**Will this advice change again?**

Like everything this advice will be kept under continual review. If it is felt that community transmission has increased and it is no longer as safe for people who have been asked to shield to go outside and meet other household members then this decision will be reviewed. However, if we are confident that transmission remains well controlled we hope that people who have been asked to shield will be able to do more.

**What other sources of support are available to me?**

We understand that these are worrying and uncertain times. You may find it helpful to visit the <https://clearyourhead.scot/> website.

The national Covid-19 helpline continues to operate. Please contact 0800 111 4000 if you need any support with shielding.