



# Stepping out of Shielding

Helping you make the right choices for you.

**We know you have all been in some form of isolation for 12 weeks now and you have done so well. The advice the government is giving is starting to change so we are going to try and break down the information so you can talk with your families and make the best choice for you.**

**Some of you have been full shielding or your families have chosen to shield to keep you safe, whatever the reason stepping out of isolation can seem a little nerve racking.**

**Some of you may feel nervous about the changes coming, some of you may be feeling happy that you can get out and about more.**

**We hope reading this will give you the facts as we know them and answer some of your questions to help you make safe choices on how you move forward. Always remember that you can contact your cardiac team advice just for you.**





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All of the information we are about to share has been taken from after looking into research and advice from the British Congenital Cardiac Association and the Congenital Cardiac Clinical reference group, the Department of Education and the Government or devolved authorities Covid-19 information and advice.

## Ways to reduce the risks of catching the virus.

No one stepping out of shielding is expected to go back to usual straight away. We will tell you the different advice for all the countries in the UK but first here are the parts that are the same no matter where you live in the UK.

- **2 meter rule** - The advice is to continue to remain 2 meters away from any one outside your family group (bubble).
- **Fresh Air** - we know that being outside reduces the risk of passing the virus. It is also clear that the bugs die more quickly if the weather is hot.
- **The new 1 meter + rule** - In place where 2 meters distance is not possible, for example on public transport, require a mask to be worn or people to stand or sit back to back. For more details follow this link. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home>
- **Returning to shopping** - Something we know some of you are excited for, should only be done if social distancing is possible. Big stores with plenty of air and space between shoppers are going to be best.
- **Masks** - the wearing of masks will become more common, especially if the 2 meter rule is impossible. They do not protect you from others as they are not medical PPE but they may prevent you or another mask wearer from spreading an infection.
- **Wash Hands** - this is the most important piece of advice. We know that the virus can be picked up on your hands and then, if you touch your face, eyes, nose mouth, you can pick up the infection. Washing your hands all the time or using sanitizers and not touching your face is a key to staying safe.
- **Outdoor clothing** - we know that the infection can be carried on shoes or on clothes. It is good practise, if you have been shopping or gone to school, to change and wash when you get home.



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## Government Guidance.

- Stay alert!**  
We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert. This means you must:
- Stay at home as much as possible.**
- Limit contact with other people.**
- Keep your distance if you go out (2 metres where possible).**
- Wash your hands regularly**
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.**

### Social Interaction

The Government has said that our households are a bubble. Staying in our bubbles up until now have enabled us to keep the risk low. The new rules allow for a single person, or a single parent family to join their bubble with another bubble.

Moving on the rules allow for one bubble to join with another bubble and to meet inside their houses. This means grandparents for example can join with their family or for two households can join together.

This will be very low risk if the two households have both followed isolation or distancing rules and neither household shows signs of the Covid infection.

Families might like to invite grandparents or one other family group to join together.

Meeting with up to 6 friends in a garden or an open space is allowed but there must be social distancing.

[Take little steps as you move out of lockdown.](#)



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## Government Guidance.

### Exercise

Exercise is encouraged for everyone. Time out in the fresh air is good for your health but going for a walk, run or bike ride, away from other people, is good for the heart and the Fontan circulation. It is also good for your mental health. Everyone, vulnerable, shielded or just at normal risk should exercise, every day if possible.

Keeping fit will help us all fight of any infection.

Being outside, protected from the sun with the normal sunscreen, will also help our Vitamin D levels.

### Return to School

The LHM team receive more questions about the return to school than any other.

The BCCA have not changed the advice they gave at the start of the month.

That advice is that children who have been are in the vulnerable group can return to school if the school have set in place the distancing regulations required by Government.

<https://www.lhm.org.uk/2020/06/12/covid-19-bcca-updated-practical-guidance-for-patients-parents-charities-and-support-groups-11-june-2020/>

As shielding is stepped down youth members that were shielding will be included in this vulnerable group. This means the rules for school will be the same for you.

[If you're unsure it's important to get your family to speak to your cardiac team for their advice.](#)

We haven't had much information about the rules that schools will follow in September yet. If the distancing rules are still in place all children with a heart condition should be able to return for the new school year. As we learn more we will share this with you.



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## Time line for change across the UK

The four countries of the uk have slightly differing step down timings but general gist is the same.

### England- From 6 July, the government will be advising:

- If you would like to you may meet in a group of up to 6 people out doors, including people from different households. If you do this you must make sure there is strict social distancing.
- You no longer need to observe social distancing with other family members living in your home.

### From 1 August the government will be advising that shielding will be paused.

This means that you can follow strict social distancing rules instead of fully shielding. Strict social distancing means you may wish to go out to more places and see more people but you should be very careful and remember to have little contact with others outside your household or support bubble.

So from 1 August:

- Your parents can go to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe
- Children and young people who are extremely vulnerable can go back to their education settings if they have been told they are allowed to. If you do you must wash your hands frequently and make sure you socially distance.
- You can go outside to buy food, to places of worship and for exercise but you should maintain strict social distancing
- You should remain cautious as you are still at risk if you catch corona virus, so the advice is to stay at home where possible and, if you do go out, follow strict social distancing.





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## Scotland

Scottish government are advising people there to continue to shield until at least 31st July. That is because, although infection rates are much lower than they were at the start of lockdown, they are not yet confident that it is safe enough to change their advice.

During this time the Scottish government have said they will continually review their advice and monitor Covid infection levels to make sure it remains the correct decision. People who are shielding will continue to receive the support they have been getting, whether that be free weekly food boxes, access to priority supermarket delivery slots, pharmacy deliveries, or other support through Local Authorities.

However they have also said that they understand that it is not fair to continue to ask people to stay at home all the time, especially as restrictions are eased for everyone else. So they will be looking for ways to gradually ease the guidance for shielding people if clinicians and scientists advise it is safe.

[If you have been advised to shield and wish to go outside for exercise after 18 June, you should take the following precautions:](#)

Go outdoors for a walk, wheel, run or cycle. They do not recommend that you take part in outdoor activities such as golf, hiking, canoeing, outdoor swimming, angling, etc. in the same way as the rest of the population can just now. You:

- Can go out on your own or with someone you live with.
- Should maintain strict physical distancing, also known as social distancing, at all times, even if you live with the person you're out with. This means keeping 2 metres (or three steps) away from other people at all times.
- Should not meet with anyone you do not live with.
- Should choose times and areas that are quiet, if you can.
- Should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as soon as you get back home.



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## Time line for change across the UK

The four countries of the UK have slightly differing step down timings but general gist is the same.

## Wales

It is not expected that any further relaxation will be possible for this group for some time and so the Welsh NHS have committed to write again to those who are shielding by 16th August.

## Northern Ireland

From 6 July, and if the risk continues to be low, people who are shielding are able to meet up to six people outside of their home, as long as social distancing is strictly observed.

People who are shielding remain vulnerable and should continue to take precautions. It is still best to stay at home as much as possible until shielding is paused.

Pausing of shielding guidance from 31 July, it is anticipated that shielding for extremely vulnerable people will be paused.

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### Reference Points:

Government Briefing

Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd June.

<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>

<https://www.lhm.org.uk/2020/06/12/covid-19-bcca-updated-practical-guidance-for-patients-parents-charities-and-support-groups-11-june-https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/06/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding-way-forward-scotland/documents/shielding-way-forward-scotland/shielding-way-forward-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/shielding-way-forward-scotland.pdf> 2020/<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding-way-forward-scotland/pages/6/>

<https://gov.wales/guidance-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-medical-grounds-extremely-vulnerable-coronavirus-0>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/guidance-shielding-extremely-vulnerable-people>