



## **BPRS Advice on Easing of Shielding for Children and Young People**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020**

This document has been produced in collaboration between BPRS, Cystic Fibrosis Medical Association and the UK Long Term Ventilation Group.

Levels of COVID-19 have decreased over the past few weeks and the morbidity and mortality in children remains extremely low. On June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020 the government announced that children and adults in the shielded groups should spend more time outside their homes from Monday July 6<sup>th</sup>. Those currently shielding from coronavirus can gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a 'support bubble' with another household. The government shielding support package will remain in place until the end of July 2020 when children and adults will no longer be advised to shield, as on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July shielding will be paused.

This advice around the easing of shielding applies to all children with respiratory conditions including Cystic Fibrosis, Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia, asthma, oxygen or long term ventilator dependency, congenital and acquired thoracic disorders and immunodeficiencies. During the period of time between now and the end of July the majority of these children and families should be encouraged to discuss the relevance of continued shielding with their clinicians. Those who no longer need to be shielded and all from July 31<sup>st</sup> in England (the dates for the Devolved Nations are not yet published) should actively be encouraged that it is safe to go out of the family home whilst still adhering to the current local guidance on social distancing, changing today from 2 metres to 1 metre.

Advice on shielding and other advice to families including FAQ's and information for talking to children about Covid-19 can be found on the RCPCH web site.

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/rcpch-releases-guidance-clinicians-shielding-children-young-people>

### **Clinic and Hospital Appointments**

Many hospital appointments over the last 3 months have been electronic, either through a videoconferencing platform or by telephone calls. Children and families should now be encouraged that it is safe to attend hospital appointments where the clinical team feel that there is an advantage in being able to see the child face to face. Some appointments can still be done remotely but BPRS encourage clinicians to restart face to face clinics even for the vulnerable and shielded patients where there are advantages in seeing them physically. Local arrangements will need to be in place to ensure safe social distancing within the hospital environment.

### **Schools and Siblings and Returning to Work**

The previously shielded children and the siblings of these vulnerable children should now be encouraged to return to school as their schools reopen. For some children this will involve a return to school for a short period in July and before the summer holiday begins. For others it will mean a return to school in September 2020. Parents of these children are able to return to work. After the school and work day children and parents should wash their hands and change their clothes.

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-ease-guidance-for-over-2-million-shielding>

(accessed 23th Jun 2020)

### **Advice about attending hospital if unwell**

Children who have an acute deterioration in respiratory symptoms such as a significant increase in underlying respiratory symptoms, asthma or croup attack or development of acute cough and/or breathlessness must seek medical advice and if necessary should attend the local hospital Emergency Department. It could be dangerous for a child with significantly deteriorating symptoms to be managed without appropriate professional assessment.