

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE AND NEED HELP

9 April 2020

Extremely vulnerable residents who need help getting food supplies or medical prescriptions - either because they are in the high-risk, 'shielded' group or have other specific difficulties - are being urged to get in touch with [Cornwall Council](#) or [Volunteer Cornwall](#).

The Council together with NHS Kernow and Volunteer Cornwall are supporting communities across Cornwall to ensure residents who need help during the COVID-19 pandemic are getting assistance.

Residents who can get help could fall into different groups depending on whether they are shielded or not:

1. Shielding after receiving a letter:

Those who have received letters from the Government advising them they are considered to be at high risk of severe illness if they catch Coronavirus because they have an underlying disease or health condition and that they should self-isolate at home for at least 12 weeks and ask others for help with shopping and prescriptions. This 'shielded' category includes:

- Organ transplant recipients
- People having treatments for some cancers
- People who have long-term lung disease or severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis
- People with conditions which make their blood and cells work differently and get infections easily
- People taking immunosuppression medications which reduce the body's response to fighting infections
- Women who are pregnant and have heart disease

Everyone in the shielding group, which covers all ages from young to old, is being asked to follow stricter social distancing rules than most people and cannot leave their homes, not even for essential shopping or exercise.

2. Suspected to be shielded but have not received a letter:

Those who believe they should be in the shielded category but have still not received a letter.

3. Not shielded but still needing help:

Residents who have not received letters stating they are in the shielded group but may still have complex or medical needs or have other difficulties in getting shopping or medicines and need assistance.

Cornwall Council and Volunteer Cornwall are now reminding vulnerable people both on and not on the shielding list, and those who are not sure, to follow these steps to ensure they get the help they need.

1. What to do if shielding:

1. As soon as you receive your letter please register by going to www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or calling 0800 0288327, the Government's dedicated helpline, to confirm receipt of your shielding letter and discuss any help you may need. Please note you have to register for help to get assistance. You may be in touch with friends, family or a support network in your community who can help you to get food and medicine, but you still need to register to ensure that support can be provided should your circumstances change.

2. If you need help collecting medical prescriptions, contact Volunteer Cornwall on 01872 266988 or email requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk. If you have a complex needs or medical question, contact the Government's helpline on 0800 0288327 or your GP.

3. As a shielded person you can receive weekly food parcels from the Government if you register and signify that you have no support in place. But if you are not receiving these parcels make sure you have registered at www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable or contact the Council on 0300 1231118 or by emailing covid19@cornwall.gov.uk and state that you are shielding. Together with Volunteer Cornwall we can help if you are vegetarian or have other dietary requirements. Please note the Council phone number will be manned over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend from 9am - 1pm daily.

4. If you are concerned about social isolation, please contact Volunteer Cornwall on 01872 266988 or email requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk.

2. What to do if you're unsure if you should be shielding or not:

If you think you should be in the shielded category but have still not received a letter, or you are unsure if you should be shielding or not, please exercise caution and contact your GP for advice.

Some shielding letters are still being sent out.

3. What to do if you are not shielding but still need help:

1. If you have not received a letter stating that you should be shielding but are having difficulties getting shopping or medical supplies, please contact Volunteer Cornwall on 01872 266988 or email requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk.

2. If you have a medical question please contact your GP or consultant.

Cornwall Council Leader Julian German said: "Together with NHS Kernow and Volunteer Cornwall we are supporting compassionate communities across Cornwall in helping both vulnerable residents who are being shielded because they are in a high-risk medical category, as well as those who are not in this specific category but may still need with help with things like food shopping and medicine collection.

“Volunteer Cornwall has over 3,000 volunteers and around 280 community groups covering the whole of Cornwall and will also be drawing on the NHS Volunteer database, so no-one has to go without the help they need.

“Anyone who has not received a letter about shielding but thinks they should have done should contact their GP. We really want to make sure that all our most vulnerable residents are receiving the support that they need.”

Cornwall Council and Volunteer Cornwall have already delivered 1,462 food parcels, medication and other support to those people who need assistance.

Emma Rowse from Volunteer Cornwall said: “We are so proud of the people and communities of Cornwall and the amazing way that they have responded to this crisis. Even at this time of uncertainty volunteers and community groups are working with us to look at a programme of recovery and how to harness this wonderful surge of good will.”

For more information on support during the pandemic visit the government website for [Corona Virus Cornwall](#).