

Q&A: Shielding Announcement 31 May 2020

This Q&A is for your internal purposes, please do not publish

General

1. *If I choose not to shield, am I putting anyone else at risk?*
 - This advice is in place to protect clinically extremely vulnerable individuals who are believed to be at greater risk of becoming severely ill if they contract COVID-19. The guidance on shielding continues to be advisory, and the Government has no plans to enforce shielding guidance. If you choose not to shield you will not put anyone else at risk.

2. *Why do we still have to shield when the incidence of the virus is now so low?*
 - The Government recognises this is challenging guidance to follow and wants to ensure that people who are shielding continue to receive the right advice for them at a time when the prevalence of the virus in the community is falling.
 - Whilst the fall in prevalence means that the Government is updating guidance to now advise that those who are shielding can spend time outdoors once a day with low risk, it has not fallen enough to entirely lift shielding advice.
 - If the prevalence of the virus continues to decline, the Government hopes to be able to provide further advice on how individuals could safely relax their individual approaches to shielding. However, if the conditions become less favourable, this advice may need to be tightened. The Government will continue to listen to medical advisers on the level of clinical risk the virus presents to different groups of people at different points in time.

3. *What happens on 30 June? Will it be extended for another 3 months?*
 - As our understanding of the virus increases, the Government continues to review the emerging evidence and continue to listen to medical advisers on the level of clinical risk the virus presents to different groups of people at different points in time.
 - At each review point for the social distancing measures, the Government will also review the risks for the clinically extremely vulnerable and assess whether the shielding period needs to be extended or whether it is possible for the shielding guidance to be eased further. The Government will base its assessment on clinical advice from medical experts, and the best data available about the prevalence of covid-19 in the community.
 - The next review will take place the week commencing 15 June. As part of this, the Government will consider the next steps for shielding beyond 30 June. It will write to all individuals on the shielded patient list with information about next steps on shielding advice and the support that will be available to them after this review point.

- On the basis of the current epidemiological trend, the Government will be looking to gradually ease advice for people to return to normal over the summer, but will review the evidence on the week commencing 15 June to check that this is still the right thing to do. However, if the conditions become less favourable, this advice may need to be tightened.
 - The core support offer remains as it is until 30 June and the Government will continue to ensure support is available for those who need it for as long as people are advised to follow shielding guidance.
4. *Can I exercise outside? If so, how often and for how long?*
- Yes, from the 1 June the shielding guidance will be updated to advise that those shielding may wish to consider spending time outdoors once a day. This can be with members of their own household or, for those shielding alone, with one person from another household.
 - For those who do choose to go outside, particular care should be taken to minimise contact with others outside their household and they should follow social distancing guidelines.
5. *Can I drive to exercise?*
- The advice for those shielding remains that you should follow strict social distancing guidelines and remain 2 metres from other people. Therefore, you should not drive to an outdoor location with members of your household or someone outside your household in the same vehicle, due to the difficulties of maintaining social distancing.
6. *Can I meet other people outside if we stay 2m apart?*
- From 1 June those shielding may wish to spend time outdoors once a day. It is advised this is alone or with members of their own household or, for those shielding alone, with one person from another household.
 - For those who do choose to go outside particular care should be taken to minimise contact with others outside their household and they should follow strict social distancing guidelines.
7. *Does the one person I meet from outside my household need to be the same person each time?*
- If you are shielding and live alone you may wish to meet with one person from another household outside, as long as they maintain social distancing. If possible, the Government advises the shielded individual meets the same person every time they go outside. This will minimise the chains of social interactions and reduce the risk of catching COVID-19.

8. *Is there a time limit on how long I should spend outdoors?*

- For those who choose to go outside, they should do so for a reasonable amount of time. It is still important that those who are shielding minimise contact with others outside their household and they should follow strict social distancing guidelines.

9. *If I go outside, do I still need to remain 2m from other members of my household?*

- For those who wish to go outside with members of their household, the advice for living with people who are shielding still applies and you should remain 2m apart.

10. *How do I safely access services such as hairdressers or cleaners?*

- The guidance for those who are shielding remains that they should avoid non-essential face-to-face contact.
- Any essential carers or visitors who support you with your everyday needs can continue to visit unless they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus.
- Essential carers coming to your home should follow advice on good hygiene: wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on arrival to your house and often while they are there (or use hand sanitiser), avoid touching their face, catch any coughs or sneezes in a tissue (or their sleeve), and put used tissues immediately in the bin and wash their hands afterwards. They should keep 2 metres away where close or personal contact is not required and where this is possible.

11. *Does this mean I can go shopping/to the pharmacy?*

- Apart from the option to spend time outdoors once a day, the guidance remains that shielded individuals should stay at home and avoid face to face contact. This includes not shopping or visiting the pharmacy.
- The Government has put a core support offer in place to help people stay at home where they wished to follow this advice, including delivering over 2 million free food boxes, providing priority supermarket delivery services, providing care, ensuring people can get medicines delivered to their homes and enlisting the help of our fantastic NHS volunteer responders in delivering shopping and calling people for a 'check in and chat'.

12. *This is a huge sacrifice for individuals - how confident are you that this is effective in keeping shielding people safe?*

- Following shielding advice is a difficult thing to do, and the Government recognises the significant challenges the shielding group have faced.

- Based on the best clinical evidence at the time, the Government identified a group of people clinicians believed to be at particularly high risk of severe disease if they were to contract COVID-19. The Government advised this group to follow shielding advice to protect themselves from the virus. As such, 2.2 million people were advised to stay at home and avoid non-essential face to face contact until the end of June, to see out the COVID-19 peak.
- Thanks to everyone's efforts to stay at home, the Government are now taking steps to ease the lockdown. As that happens, we all need to ensure that people who are shielding continue to receive the right advice for them at a time when the prevalence of the virus in the community is falling.

13. Why is the advice for England different to the advice for other parts of the UK?

- The UK Government is working in lock step with the Devolved Administrations, World Health Organization, and international partners to keep the whole of the UK safe.
- We have confronted this virus as one United Kingdom. However, the virus has spread at different rates across the country, therefore different parts of the UK may begin to move at slightly different speeds.

Support offer

14. Will you continue to provide support to those who are shielding if they have to continue past the end of June?

- The core support offer remains as it is until 30 June and the Government will continue to ensure support is available for those who need it for as long as people are advised to follow shielding guidance.

15. What support can I access whilst I'm shielding?

- The Government's offer to Shielding individuals who request support covers the following three areas of assistance:
 - i. Essential supplies** – a free, standardised weekly parcel of food and household essentials, and priority delivery slots with supermarkets;
 - ii. Medicines** – arrangements to have medicines delivered to people's homes by local community pharmacies or their dispensing doctor;
 - iii. Social contact and basic needs** – for example, emotional or social support such as people to talk to on the phone or via a computer.

- The Government has provided over 2 million free food boxes and over 170,000 free medicine deliveries to those who have been advised to shield
- As part of the registration process, individuals have been asked to indicate whether they have unmet basic care needs, such as social care and social contact needs. Councils are best placed to respond to these needs, and the Government is sharing data with them to ensure vulnerable individuals get the support they need.
- The Government has provided £3.2 billion in additional funding to help councils manage the immediate impact of coronavirus.
- The Secretary of State for Communities has encouraged councils to make use of our NHS Volunteers in delivering shopping and calling people for a 'check in and chat'.
- NHS Volunteer Responders can deliver shopping and call people for a 'check in and chat'. As part of its support offer, the Government has committed to free medicines delivery for all those who have been advised to shield, as of 5 May 172,952 medicines deliveries have been claimed through this scheme

Food delivery

16. I can afford my own food, can I just have a priority home delivery slot rather than a food box?

- Yes. The Government recognises that getting an online delivery slot gives people access to a wider range of food and household products.
- The Government has given supermarkets the information they need – in addition to their own data – to ensure deliveries are prioritised to those with medical conditions that make them most vulnerable.
- If you don't need the food box anymore, including because you have started to get online supermarket deliveries, you should re-register through the gov.uk website as no longer needing a food delivery. Alternatively, you can inform your delivery driver at the door that you no longer require these food parcels.
- Individuals that opt out of food parcels will not lose their priority delivery slot with supermarkets.

17. Are you going to take away my food box? I can't afford supermarket deliveries/ I don't have anyone to go to the shops for me/ I am too scared to go to the shops.

- The Government understands how challenging this period is for everyone, especially those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.
- The core support offer remains as it is until 30 June and the Government will continue to ensure support is available for those who need it for as long as people are advised to follow shielding guidance.

- The Government has given supermarkets the information they need – in addition to their own data – to ensure deliveries are prioritised to those with medical conditions that make them most vulnerable.
- If a person receiving a food box needs support from the NHS Volunteer Responders programme, they can call 0808 196 3646 to be linked with a volunteer who can do a food shop for them. A carer or family member can also do this on their behalf.
- There are also commercial food delivery options available, including food boxes and prepared meals. A list of these has been shared with councils and charities.

18. Can you guarantee I'll have free food for as long as I'm being asked to shield for?

- The core support offer remains as it is until 30 June and the Government will continue to ensure support is available for those who need it for as long as people are advised to follow shielding guidance.

19. The food boxes were fine for 3 months, but aren't nutritional enough/ are too boring for longer.

- The food boxes contain a basic selection of food and other essential items. They are a standardised package designed to be suitable for the majority of people and contain enough food for one person for one week, as reviewed by nutritionists and key industry groups.
- People may want to access to a wider range of food and household products, and there are a number of ways in which they can get this.
- The Government has given supermarkets the information they need – in addition to their own data – to ensure deliveries are prioritised to those with medical conditions that make them most vulnerable.
- If a person meets the criteria to get support from the NHS Volunteer Responders programme, they can call 0808 196 3646 to be linked with a volunteer who can do a food shop for them. A carer or family member can also do this on their behalf.
- There are also commercial food delivery options available, including food boxes and prepared meals. A list of these has been shared with councils and charities.
- For those with special dietary needs that may not be met by the packs they receive, they should contact their Local Authority for further help and advice.
- Anyone in urgent need of support should contact their local authority, most of which have dedicated Covid-19 helplines.

Health

20. Can I see my doctor?

- Any changes to your care plan should be discussed with your GP or hospital clinician but, in general, the following advice applies:
- Planned GP practice appointments – Wherever possible, GPs will provide care by phone, email or online. But if they decide you need to be seen in person, they will contact you to arrange your visit to the surgery or a visit in your home.
- Planned hospital appointments – NHS England has written to your hospital to ask them to review any ongoing care that you have with them. It is possible that some clinics and appointments will be cancelled or postponed. Your hospital or clinic will contact you if any changes need to be made to your care or treatment. Otherwise you should assume your care or treatment is taking place as planned. Please contact your hospital or clinic directly if you have any questions about a specific appointment.

21. I need to attend regular appointments for treatment, how do I do so safely?

- Planned GP practice appointments – Wherever possible, GPs will provide care by phone, email or online. But if they decide you need to be seen in person, they will contact you to arrange your visit to the surgery or a visit in your home.
- Planned hospital appointments – NHS England has written to your hospital to ask them to review any ongoing care that you have with them. It is possible that some clinics and appointments will be cancelled or postponed. Your hospital or clinic will contact you if any changes need to be made to your care or treatment. Otherwise you should assume your care or treatment is taking place as planned. Please contact your hospital or clinic directly if you have any questions about a specific appointment.

22. Can carers visit to provide medical support?

- Yes, any essential carers or visitors who support you with your everyday needs can continue to visit unless they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus.
- Essential carers coming to your home should follow advice on good hygiene: wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds on arrival to your house and often while they are there (or use hand sanitiser), avoid touching their face, catch any coughs or sneezes in a tissue (or their sleeve), and put used tissues immediately in the bin and wash their hands afterwards. They should keep 2 metres away where close or personal contact is not required and where this is possible.

23. I'm worried about my mental health, what should I do?

- It is very normal during these uncertain and unusual times to be experiencing distress or anxiety or be feeling low. Go to the [Every Mind Matters](#) website and GOV.UK for advice and tailored, practical steps that you can take to support your wellbeing and manage your mental health during this pandemic.
- 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.

24. What mental health support is available?

- 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. A national service finder for local urgent mental health telephone lines is now available on [the NHS.UK website](#).
- The Government has issued guidance to those shielding and this has been accompanied by expanded digital mental health support such as [Every Mind Matters](#), which has now seen 2.7 million visits since the introduction of social distancing.
- All mental health providers, including providers of psychological therapies services, have been issued with guidance to encourage them to deliver care remotely so that vulnerable groups, including those who are shielding, can receive care safely.

25. If my clinical condition improves, will I be able to stop shielding?

- The shielded patient list is dynamic and allows for clinicians to make decisions about whether a patient remains on, or is removed from, the list. That decision should be made following discussion with the patient and taking into account their individual circumstances.
- GPs and hospital specialists have been asked to review their shielded patient lists based on clinical judgement and an assessment of everyone's needs. GPs and hospital specialists have been provided with guidance to support these decisions. Anybody whose condition has improved should contact their GP or specialist to discuss further.

26. Does my whole household have to shield?

- In line with the current public health advice, those living with shielding people are not required to shield themselves. They should support those shielding and carefully follow the guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) and the Government has published guidance to support them at home with the person who is shielding.

27. What does this mean for care homes? Can shielding people in care homes also go outdoors?

- The Government is currently reviewing its care homes guidance and will be publishing new guidance shortly. Care home managers and proprietors need to undertake a balanced risk assessment when implementing government guidance, this needs to consider the needs of all residents and staff in the care home.
- Any assessment of a resident's needs and subsequent decisions made must consider individual circumstances and ethical implications, ensuring that the resident is treated with respect so that their human rights, personal choices, safety and dignity is upheld.

Financial/employment

30. If I/someone in my home have to continue shielding and can't work from home, does the employer have to keep the job open/keep paying me?

- We are considering all levers available to the Government – financial, legislative and non-legislative - to ensure employees are not worse off as a result of shielding. As the Prime Minister has repeatedly made clear, nobody should be penalised for following the advice.
- The Government expects employers to do the right thing by supporting their shielding employees to follow the guidance.
- You should work from home insofar as is possible, and your employer is expected to help you to do this.
- The Government is clear that employers should support their staff to follow the shielding guidance.
- If you are unable to work from home, you should discuss and agree your options with your employer. These options may include:
 - At times, it may be appropriate for you to take up an alternative role or adjust your working patterns temporarily.
 - Some employers may also be able to offer different types of leave. Beyond your statutory annual leave entitlement, this will be at the employer's discretion.
 - Employers can agree to furlough a shielding worker under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. If your employer does not put you on furlough, you may be entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (at £95.85 pw).

28. I cannot work from home. What support is available to me whilst I continue to shield?

- We have set out an unprecedented package of financial support to help the country through the coronavirus pandemic, and those shielding are able to access these, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self Employed Income Support package and Statutory Sick Pay.

- This support continues to be provided, with the CJRS running until the end of October and we are continuing to work hard across Government to ensure those shielding get the financial assistance they need.

29. How do I get signed-off work if I am shielding?

- Employees or workers should talk to their employer as soon as they can if they:
 - have been told to start shielding
 - think they might need to start shielding
 - If you are shielding, you should work from home insofar as is possible, and your employer is expected to help you to do this.
 - If you are unable to work in your normal role, or do all of your usual tasks from home, you should discuss and agree your options with your employer.

30. How do I know if my staff have been asked to shield? How will they prove it?

- If someone has been identified as being at particularly high risk of severe disease if they were to contract COVID-19, they should have been sent a letter advising them to shield. If they don't have a letter, then they should speak to their GP or hospital specialist to discuss whether they should be on the shielded patient list and obtain a letter if their clinician agrees they should be shielding.

Housing

31. Can I be evicted from my home whilst I'm shielding?

- No. Measures to protect tenants during the COVID-19 outbreak remain in place.
- Through the Coronavirus Act, landlords must give all tenants three months' notice if they intend to seek possession (i.e. serve notice that they want to end the tenancy) – this means the landlord cannot apply to start the court process until after this period. The provision is currently in place up to 30 September 2020.
- From 27 March the court service has suspended all ongoing housing possession action – this means that neither cases currently in the system nor any about to go into it can progress to the stage where someone could be evicted.
- Any decision to alter the duration of these emergency measures will be informed by the wider government approach to lockdown measures and Public Health England guidance, alongside consideration of the needs of tenants and landlords.

32. Can someone still come round to my home for maintenance/safety checks?

- No work should be carried out in your home unless it is to remedy a direct risk that affects your safety or the safety of your household.

These are issues which will affect your ability to live safely and maintain your mental and physical health in your home.

- For people shielding in rented properties, your landlord will be best placed to determine if an annual gas safety inspection is absolutely necessary.
- Where a visit is necessary, tradespeople and landlords should keep up to date with and follow the latest Government guidance on working safely in people's homes. For example, prior arrangements should be made to avoid any face to face contact, for example, when answering the door.

33. Can I leave my home if myself or my children are at risk of domestic abuse?

- The household isolation instruction as a result of coronavirus does not apply if you need to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.
- Any individual in danger and who is unable to talk on the phone, should call 999 and then either press 55 on a mobile when prompted or wait on a landline and you will be connected to a police call handler who will be able to assist you without you having to speak.
- Refuges have continued to be open throughout the lockdown period to provide safe accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse.
- On 7 May a £10 million Emergency Support Fund was announced for charitable domestic abuse safe accommodation service providers. Funding will help ensure that:
 - Safe accommodation services can continue operating and keep bed spaces open for victims and their children fleeing from abuse during COVID-19 emergency.
 - Safe accommodation services can help more victims access these life-saving services.

34. What support is available for those who are homeless or rough sleeping and have been asked to shield?

- Anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness should contact their local authority as soon as possible.

35. I have been asked to shield, am I okay to move house?

- The Government recognises people who are shielding or otherwise vulnerable may have pressing needs to move home; however, this should be balanced with the increased risks presented by coronavirus.
- Those shielding will need to carefully consider their personal situation and the circumstances of their own move and may wish to seek medical advice before deciding whether to commit to or go ahead with a move. Some moves are likely to be lower risk - for instance if the

home is empty, all travel can take place in their own transport and they can avoid contact with others.

- Further details are set out in government guidance on home moving <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Education

36. Should my shielded child go to school? If not, when will they be able to go back to school?

- Our advice to children who are clinically extremely vulnerable and shielding remains that The Government does not expect these children to be attending school or college, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible. As with all shielding guidance, this is based on the risk to individuals, which will reflect the prevalence of COVID-19 in the UK amongst other factors. The Government will keep this under close review and may change the advice if COVID-19 prevalence decreases significantly.
- Parents should notify their nursery/school/college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

37. I am shielding, should my child go to school? Will I be fined if they don't?

- If a child, young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, the Government does not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn or work at home.
- Parents should notify their nursery/school/college as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

38. Practically, how do schools need to be notified if someone will or will not be attending based on this advice?

- Families should notify their nursery, school or college as normal if their child is unable to attend.

39. *Should staff who are shielding work in education and childcare settings?*

- The guidance on [Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#) strongly advises people, including education staff, who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe.
- Staff in this position are advised not to attend the workplace. More advice on this can be found in the guidance on [Shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#).

40. *Should staff in education and childcare settings who live with someone with a serious underlying health condition who is taking shielding measures, stay at home?*

- If a member of staff lives in a household with someone who is extremely critically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on [Shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#), it is advised that they should only attend work if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, they should be supported to work from home.
- If a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

41. *We've been told every day a child misses school has a huge impact, what is the impact on my (/my child's) education going to be from shielding?*

- The Government understand that the coronavirus outbreak has caused disruption to young people's education as teachers and parents have had to adapt to remote education. The Government is taking steps to make sure every child, whatever their background, has the support they need to deal with the impact of coronavirus on their education and wellbeing.
- Schools and colleges should use reasonable endeavours to support those attending as well as those remaining at home, making use of the available remote education support.
- We've already committed over £100 million to support remote education. The Government is providing laptops and tablets to vulnerable and disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examination in Year 10, those receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children, or are a care leaver. Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in Year 10 do not have

internet connections, the Government will be providing 4G wireless routers to them so that they can learn at home.

- The government is also ensuring every school that wants it has access to free, expert technical support to get set up on Google for Education or Microsoft's Office 365 Education, and offering peer support from schools and colleges leading the way with the use of education technology.
- The Government has published a comprehensive range of advice and guidance to support schools during this time. This includes [a list of quality online resources](#), identified by some of the country's leading educational experts, to help pupils learn at home.
- In addition, the [Oak National Academy](#) is a brand-new enterprise that has been created by 40 teachers from schools across England. It is providing 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. And the [BBC](#) has developed a comprehensive new education package, available on TV, via the red button and iPlayer and online at [BBC Bitesize](#).

42. What about young people and adults that attend FE settings and are shielding – what support can they get to access remote education?

- The Government understands that what providers can offer during this period will vary. Some colleges and FE providers have shifted much of their provision online and are delivering classes and other teacher led activity to a regular timetable.
- 16 to 19-year-olds in education without a suitable device and/or connectivity to study remotely and whose family can't afford these costs will be eligible for support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Providers should consider supporting them e.g. by providing a device where necessary to access remote education.

43. What support is available to support young people's mental health and wellbeing whilst shielding?

- Many learners will be feeling uncertain and anxious and it is vital that they can still access the mental health support they need. Providers will need to consider their learners' mental health and wellbeing and identify learners who may need additional support.
- All NHS mental health trusts are setting up 24/7 helplines and seeking to use digital and virtual channels to continue delivering support during the pandemic.
- Social connections, alongside exercise, sleep, a healthy diet and routine, are important protective factors for mental health. Resources to

promote and support mental wellbeing are included in the list of online resources published to help children and young people to learn at home.

- Public Health England have also published more extensive guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is providing £5m of additional funding for mental health charities (to support adults and children)

44. What will you do about pupils who can't access online learning (and who are not eligible for a device to be provided)?

- Schools are best placed to make judgements about how to support the remote education of individual pupils.
- For those pupils who are not connected, schools will be able to draw on support from the BBC, which is broadcasting lessons on television, and may choose to draw on the many resource offers made by publishers across the country.
- The department has also developed comprehensive advice and guidance to support the sector in identifying and sharing best practice for remote education.

45. How will my child learn while shielding?

- The Government wants to do everything it can to support schools and families to continue children's education while they are at home, recognising that schools, pupils, parents and carers are facing unprecedented challenges and have developed a package of support to address this.
- The Government has published [a list of quality online resources](#), identified by some of the country's leading educational experts, to help pupils learn at home. There is also a range of [advice and guidance](#) for parents and carers of children who are learning at home, covering different age ranges as well as specific guidance for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- To support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education, Oak National Academy launched on Monday 20 April. This brand-new enterprise has been created by 40 teachers from schools across England. It is providing 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. Specialist content for learners with SEND was launched on 4 May. This covers communication and language, numeracy, creative arts, independent living, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech and language therapy.

- For those in rural areas or without a connection, schools will be able to draw on support from the BBC which is broadcasting lessons on television via the red button, and may choose to draw on the many resources offers which have been made by publishers across the country.

Early Years

46. Will it be compulsory to take up places in EY settings for those children who are eligible? What if I don't feel safe sending my child back to nursery?

- Attendance at early years settings will continue to be voluntary and non-statutory, though parents are encouraged to send in their children to early years settings, as they would normally, as long as there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household.
- Children and staff who have been classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions](#) have been advised to shield. The Government does not expect people in this category to attend early years settings, and they should continue to be supported to learn or work at home as much as possible.

47. What provision is the Government making for children unable to return to childcare settings at this stage (e.g. because of health reasons)?

- Many early years settings have already shared resources for children who are at home.
- The home learning environment is crucial for child development, and it will be even more so for those children without access to early education. There are many simple ways to help children learn and it does not have to feel like 'learning'. Having everyday conversations, make-believe play and reading together all make a big difference to children's development.

To support parents and children at this time:

- The Department for Education's *Hungry Little Minds* campaign (<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>) features tips and practical activities that parents can do at home with children to support their early learning.
- DfE have also published additional guidance for parents about how to support their child's development at home during Covid-19: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

- DfE have already published a list of online educational resources that are suitable for parents to use with under 5s, and we are looking to direct parents to more great content to support their children's development during this difficult time. There is a wealth of other resources available for parents – including the BBC's Tiny Happy People campaign (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>) and the National Literacy Trust's Family Zone (<https://literacytrust.org.uk/family-zone/>) amongst others.
- The Government are also adapting £3.8m worth of existing grants to charities to support children's early literacy and language development.