



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Chris Townsend OBE
Chief Executive
Shielding Programme
2 Marsham Street
London

27 April 2020

Dear Local Authority Chief Executive

MHCLGs new regional Shielding team - supporting local work to protect extremely clinically vulnerable people at higher risk from COVID-19

Further to my email last week, with an updated copy of our guidance for local authorities, I am writing to explain the role of new regional leads in the Shielding Team.

In these unprecedented times, our huge and evolving task is bringing together national and local government, the food industry and other partners from the voluntary sector and beyond. Thank you for the incredible efforts which you and your teams continue to make as we work in partnership to assist, support and protect individuals who are shielding from the coronavirus.

Over the first few weeks of the programme we have seen the advantages of close working between councils and the central Shielding Team.

I want to amplify the local voices involved – including councils - to shape the programme and influence the decisions we take. Therefore, my team has moved quickly to create a new local structure to strengthen our existing partnerships.

This new team will work hand-in-hand with existing structures – including Government Liaison Officers, Regional Lead Chief Executives and other groups - with one main aim: to ensure the Shielding programme is the best that it can be, for the benefit of those who rely on it. It will be split along the lines of the 9 English super-regions, with each region having a small team of civil servants to work with.

As part of this, we are providing every unitary, county and district council in England with a named civil servant to act as your Shielding contact.

The official supporting you will have introduced themselves in the covering email which accompanies this letter. I would be grateful if you could now nominate someone suitably senior on your side as our lead point of contact, if not yourself. My team will then follow up, to get things going quickly.



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I am proud to lead this programme and determined to do all I can to ensure those most at risk from the coronavirus get the support they need. I am very grateful for all you are doing to shield those most at risk in our communities across the country - thank you.

We hope this new structure will ensure effective and timely support for your teams as the Shielding programme evolves in the weeks ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Townsend OBE
Chief Executive Officer
Government Shielding Programme