

## Shielding Package FAQs Pack: Local Authorities

To note: the term ‘extremely vulnerable’ in this document refers to those who are at very high risk of severe illness from Coronavirus (COVID-19) because of specified underlying medical conditions. The ‘Shielding Programme’ and the following FAQs specifically refer to the support package provided for these individuals.

For individuals who do not fall within this definition, the Government is considering what further support may be required. We would encourage Local Authority hubs to consider how wider voluntary and community service providers could be used.

Further information on the criteria for the ‘extremely vulnerable’ group can be found here:

<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>

Question	Answer
<b>We have not received the full list of people identified as extremely vulnerable in our area. When can we expect it?</b>	<p>We are in the process of providing to Local Hubs the full list of individuals identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable due to their medical status. Nationally this is currently around 900,000 (with a further 600,000 expected to be updated by GPs) and we can only apologise that it has taken longer than expected to subdivide this data by LA for sharing. We have had to prioritise the data which enabled the food packages to start being delivered to those who had actively registered and requested it.</p> <p>We expect local authorities to receive this data by the end of this week</p>
<b>We are not receiving information on those extremely vulnerable individuals in our area who have requested support.</b>	<p>An initial two tranches of data on those that have registered on the website and call centre has now been sent to the relevant local hub.</p> <p>If you have not received this, please contact <a href="mailto:transfer-coronavirus-data-service@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk">transfer-coronavirus-data-service@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk</a>. <a href="#">This will</a> be updated regularly.</p>
<b>Why did some bulk deliveries come directly to our local authority, rather than direct to the doorstep of those identified as extremely vulnerable?</b>	<p>The emergency bulk offer which we organised at the end of March was a <u>one-off arrangement</u> to tide over any areas which felt they needed a little extra support before the ‘direct to doorstep’ food package system became fully operational. We moved very quickly to source enough supplies for a national offer equivalent in scale to 10,000 of the individual boxes and made around 160 local drop offs at the hub venues agreed by local partners. This emergency offer was a short-term fix, or <u>emergency stop-gap</u>, for anyone identified as extremely vulnerable and in need of food urgently, as the direct-to-door system gears up to become fully operational.</p>
<b>The items we received in the bulk emergency drop were not what we were expecting.</b>	<p>Since we first advertised the emergency offer last week in the guidance which was sent to every Local Authority and Local Resilience Forums, we have sent follow up emails to local areas outlining that the emergency bulk contents would not mirror the contents of the standard food boxes and would be drawn from existing supplies of what’s available to suppliers right now. The items that we have been able to source and deliver are largely ‘ambient’ and should not require refrigeration or other special storage facilities.</p>

	<p>For speed, the emergency goods did not arrive packed into the individual boxes. Instead the food arrives in a large consignment (pallets/cages or large boxes) for local partners to break down, pack and distribute to meet any urgent need in local communities. We expect you will be able to identify and target support for those most in need within your own local area better than we would be able to do from central government – hence the direct delivery of these good to your preferred storage locations.</p>
<p><b>What is the difference between the bulk deliveries to local authorities and food package deliveries to doorsteps?</b></p>	<p>The Government has offered a direct to door weekly food parcel service for all those who are extremely vulnerable who require <u>and</u> are in need of support getting essential supplies.. Over 4000 food parcels have already been delivered this weekend and more parcels are expected to go out next week from wholesalers across the country, bringing the first set of doorstep deliveries to more than 50 000. This will continue to ramp up as required.</p> <p>We ask that local authorities support us by reaching out to those who have requested assistance bringing the box inside, and we are working to share regular information with you facilitate that work.</p> <p>These bulk deliveries were intended to be a one-off emergency stop-gap for anyone in the extremely vulnerable group who needs food urgently, to supplement the direct-to-door food package delivery system as it gears up to become fully operational. It was intended to assist Local Authorities in dealing with urgent cases only.</p>
<p><b>Can I find out when deliveries will be made to individuals in my area?</b></p>	<p>We are working with the Government Digital Service and food providers (Brakes and Bidfoods) to ensure that local authorities will have access to a regular flow of data about who has requested a food package, who needs help carrying their box into the house, and when that delivery has been made.</p> <p>In advance of this regular flow of data we have come up with a temporary fix so Local Hubs know when food parcels are being delivered, and so you know where individuals are receiving parcels where they have indicated they might need help bringing it in. We have shared an initial tranche of information on deliveries made over the weekend and those in the system to occur soon. This has been sent as a secure link to the named data lead for each Local Authority hub. Local Authority hubs should compare this with data they have already received identifying who within in their area have indicated that that they need help bringing in their box. A further upload of data is expected to take place later this week and we will notify you when that is the case.</p>
<p><b>Will individuals know when they can expect a delivery?</b></p>	<p>No. Delivery dates and time slots are not communicated. The food service providers are aiming to make the first deliveries within 7 days of receiving information (from the website/call centre) on who needs a parcel but in a few cases we understand this could be slightly longer. As the system ramps up, deliveries will be made weekly.</p>
<p><b>Can I share data with others e.g. voluntary organisations?</b></p>	<p>A guidance note on data sharing will be shared very shortly. Pending that, the general principle is in respect of shielding data- that elements essential for ensuring people get the required support can be shared where</p>

	necessary. Anything else is not permitted. If you need to seek guidance, contact details will be included in the above guidance note.
<b>We have not received any detail on the bulk delivery of food to our hub. When can we expect it?</b>	Deliveries are in the process of going out to all Local Authorities who requested a bulk delivery to deal with urgent cases.
<b>We have been sent incorrect data meant for another LA. What should we do?</b>	If you have received records in error, please let us know immediately and ensure that you have fully deleted them
<b>What advice should we give volunteers supporting those who have been identified as extremely vulnerable individuals?</b>	<p>You should make sure that all your volunteers have read and understand the guidance on social distancing.</p> <p>All volunteers supporting extremely vulnerable individuals must always abide by the social distancing guidance, including keeping at least 2 metres away from those they are visiting and washing their hands regularly and should not enter the property unless explicitly asked to.</p>
<b>Deliveries</b>	
<b>What if the bulk delivery doesn't contain enough food?</b>	<p>The bulk deliveries have been provided to local authorities to supplement deliveries that are already taking place direct to the doorstep of those identified as extremely vulnerable. This is intended to assist in dealing with urgent cases. There is currently no plan to deliver a second batch</p> <p>Local Authorities should only provide essential items to extremely vulnerable people they believe may need immediate support, or if there is a specific dietary requirement which the standardised box doesn't cater for. This food should not be used to support wider vulnerable groups beyond those identified as extremely vulnerable.</p>
<b>What if demand for the Local Support System exceeds the capacity to meet it?</b>	<p>We are exploring with supermarkets the potential for them to prioritise those that are extremely vulnerable and have requested a centralised food delivery. This would supplement the basic box offer which will exist throughout. Until then we will need to work within the constraints of the centralised system and we have ensured bulk delivery has been, or will shortly be issued.</p> <p>If there is overwhelming demand from extremely vulnerable people coming directly to the Local Authority you should contact <a href="mailto:shielding@communities.gov.uk">shielding@communities.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Why aren't the bulk deliveries in individual boxes?</b>	The bulk deliveries have been put together and delivered in bulk by the supplier drawing on existing supplies to meet emergency demand. They do not contain a set number of goods/products. It is up to the Local Authority to assess what will be of most use to the individual in the immediate future, bearing in mind this is intended to supplement food boxes that will be delivered directly to those who have requested them. Unfortunately, we are unable to add additional products to the initial delivery at this time.

<b>What's in the packages that are delivered to individuals?</b>	As of now and subject to supply an individual box contains; hot beverages (coffee, tea bags), biscuits, bread, cereal, tinned veg, potatoes, long life milk, tinned protein (fish, cold meat excl pork, corned beef), fresh fruit, pasta sauce, pasta and rice, toilet tissue, hand soap or shower gel.
<b>How many people does the box supply for?</b>	An individual box is based on 1 person for 1 week.
<b>What if I think someone is in immediate need and we haven't got any goods/ food left?</b>	We hope that between the centralised system and bulk food deliveries, this situation should not arise. In the rare event that it does, Local Authorities will need to find a localised solution, drawing on support from Local Resilience Forums if necessary.
<b>What is the centralised system?</b>	<p>The NHS has sent letters to 900,000 persons who have been identified as being extremely vulnerable due to their medical status asking them to stay at home for 12 weeks. We expect a further 600,000 to self-refer having been contacted by their GP or specialists over the coming week that they are in this extremely vulnerable cohort. For those that don't have family or friends that can support them in getting essentials, a website and hotline have been set up for the individual to request an essentials box to be delivered. This is a centralised, free system.</p> <p>Local Authorities will be sent the data of those that have registered on the website and call centre. Local Authorities do not need to deliver boxes to these individuals. Local Authorities should assess where there might be a more immediate or particular need within this group and use the bulk delivery to provide supplementary support.</p>
<b>What are people being told to contact their Local Authority about.</b>	If people receiving or due to receive a box require immediate assistance, they are advised to contact their Local Authority. This might be because they have an immediate need for food in advance of the box being delivered, they have dietary requirements that are not met by the food in the box and do not have enough food to sustain them or they have wider care needs.
<b>How will they know how to contact the Local Authority.</b>	Please put contact details clearly on your website, and ensure your contact centre knows where to direct people with urgent issues to resolve relating to the Shielding programme
<b>Individuals are contacting us about dietary requirements, why is this?</b>	In the standardised box which is delivered to individuals there is an A4 note which explains should the individual have any allergies or religious/cultural dietary requirements they should contact the Local Authority. Local Authorities should then use their resources, including the bulk food delivery, to help support the individual.
<b>How will we know who can't carry a box into their house, and when they will be getting their delivery</b>	We are working with the Government Digital Service to ensure that local authorities will have access to a regular flow of data about who has requested a food package, who needs help carrying their box into the house and when that delivery has been made. In advance of that, to identify where individuals have received a package and may need support bringing it in, we have shared with local authorities an initial tranche of data about deliveries made over the weekend and those coming up shortly to match against information you will have already received identifying people who need help carrying the box in. This data on who has or is shortly receiving a box was sent via a secure link to the Local Authority hub's named data lead.
<b>Wider needs</b>	
<b>What is the role of the hotline?</b>	The automated hotline has been designed to help assess an individual's support needs. It has the capacity to send outbound automated messages to individuals.

	A further manned outbound call centre is contacting people who have not responded to either the website or automated messages. This is not an inbound helpline i.e. it cannot receive calls. Individuals have been asked to contact their Local Authority directly where they need further support.
<b>When will the outbound call centre start contacting vulnerable people?</b>	The hotline has been live and the outbound call centre has been contacting those that have been identified as extremely vulnerable due to their medical status since Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> March.
<b>What will happen with the information gathered by the hotline/outbound call centre?</b>	The information collected via the automated hotline and the outbound call centre will be used to arrange food deliveries directly to vulnerable people. The outbound call centre will be also referring people with urgent welfare and care needs to LAs.
<b>Are you providing support to people with urgent welfare needs?</b>	Our call agents will make a referral to you if they identify a person with urgent welfare needs – of the sort where urgent social services support would be required.
<b>How are we going to be notified about people with urgent welfare needs?</b>	There are two avenues by which this could happen; an individual may contact a Local Authority directly or the outbound call centre, which is contacting those that have been issued a letter, will contact the relevant Local Authority if they think there is an immediate need which the centralised system cannot support. Please ensure you have provided an emergency contact number to us for this purpose. If you haven't please do so to: <a href="mailto:shielding@communities.gov.uk">shielding@communities.gov.uk</a>
<b>What about wider needs? What role should local authorities play?</b>	As well as supporting those who need help bringing their food packages inside, you are also being regularly provided with data on those who have indicated they need help to meet their basic needs (e.g. people to talk to, help to bathe, clean their house etc). We need you to reach out to those people and assess what help is required and how best it can be supported, using Local Authority resources or voluntary and community services as appropriate.
<b>How will you arrange deliveries and other support for people of no fixed abode?</b>	If someone who has been contacted via our call centre is of no fixed abode, they will be directed to contact their Local Authorities as we are unable to deliver food without an address.
<b>What about other vulnerable people, who are not on the list of clinically extremely vulnerable?</b>	The Shielding Programme is in place for those identified as extremely vulnerable people, as a result of specified medical conditions. The centralised support offer is only available to those who fall within these criteria. We would encourage Local Authority hubs to consider how wider voluntary and community service providers can provide further support to others who have requested it.