

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2020

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email.

You are correct that Government guidance applies differently to different groups of people – the clinically well, the clinically vulnerable and the clinically extremely vulnerable. There is also separate, specific guidance on isolation for households with a possible coronavirus infection.

The confusion appears to have been partly fuelled by the fact the government has two separate but similarly named categories, each asked to follow different requirements: "clinically vulnerable" and "clinically extremely vulnerable".

Some people, including those aged 70 and over, those with specific chronic pre-existing conditions and pregnant women, are clinically vulnerable, meaning they are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. As we begin to ease restrictions, this group who are clinically vulnerable – are being advised to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household" and follow the general guidelines more stringently than others.

There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus – that is, people with specific serious health conditions. They are advised to continue shielding to keep themselves safe by staying at home and avoiding gatherings or, if individuals wish to spend time outdoors, to take extra care to minimise contact with others by keeping two metres apart at all times.

I can understand the confusion although it has been stated numerous times that those who were required to "shield" themselves would receive a letter from the NHS. I will ensure that my colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care are aware of your concern.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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