



BRITISH CONGENITAL CARDIAC ASSOCIATION

**COVID-19: BCCA updated guidance for patients, parents, charities and support groups in light of national lockdown for England: 11 November 2020**

**Introduction:**

In response to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases across the UK the Government announced new national restrictions in England to help control the spread of the virus that will apply from 5 November 2020. These are due to stay in place until 2 December 2020 with a return at that time to regional restrictions or a further announcement. Guidance for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has also been updated.

**Guidance:**

Patients with congenital heart disease should continue to follow government advice with regards to COVID-19.

Detailed updated information has been published for each of the nations of the UK. This includes advice for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those who were shielding during the first lockdown) which includes some adults and children with congenital heart disease. Adults with Down syndrome as well as those with chronic kidney disease stage 5 have been added to the highly clinically vulnerable group. If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you should have received a letter confirming this or have been told directly by your GP or hospital clinician.

There appears to be a very low risk of **children** becoming very unwell from COVID-19 and some children previously placed in the extremely vulnerable group may now be classed as less vulnerable and this should be discussed with you cardiac team. The guideline for England states:

*'More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from COVID-19, even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow this advice. Speak to your GP or specialist clinician, if you have not already done so, to understand whether your child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.'*

*Those children whose doctors have confirmed they are still clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school while this advice is in place. Your school will make appropriate arrangements for you to be able to continue your education at home. Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.'*

The specific guidelines for children who remain in the highly clinically vulnerable group are detailed in the links below.

If you are an adult with congenital heart disease in England who has been classified by your clinician as being clinically extremely vulnerable and cannot work from home you should not attend work. Details of the actions you should take and support available are in the links below.

There are some differences in the guidelines for highly clinically vulnerable patients for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which are detailed in the links below.

Helpful links:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-guidance-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-children-young-people#group-b>

### **Government guidance**

Guidance for England:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

<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>

Guidance for Wales:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions>

<https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html>

Guidance for Scotland:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/>

Guidance for Northern Ireland:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-and-vulnerable-people>

The recent announcement with regards to a potential vaccine is encouraging, however this is likely to be some time off being routinely available, and should not detract from the above guidance.

BCCA, 11 November 2020