



Removal of Children and Young People from the Shielded Patient List – FAQs

24 August 2021

Introduction

The information provided below applies to children and young people under the age of 18 who have previously been identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. A Q&A section has been included below to support the parents/guardians of those affected children and young people.

COVID-19 risk for children and young people

The former Deputy Chief Medical Officer of England Professor Jennifer Harries commissioned studies looking at the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. These studies found that children and young people, including those originally considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), are at very low risk of becoming seriously unwell from the virus. This information was then discussed at an expert panel who recommended that all children and young people under the age of 18 should no longer be considered CEV and be removed from the Shielded Patient List, the national database of people considered clinically extremely vulnerable. This recommendation was presented to the Chief Medical Officers of the UK who agreed with the recommendation.

COVID-19 vaccination

All 16 and 17 year olds who are either clinically extremely vulnerable or have underlying health conditions or are in roles at high risk of transmitting the virus to vulnerable individuals should already have been offered a COVID-19 vaccine as part of Phase 1 of the vaccination programme. The Government announced on 4th August that following JCVI advice all remaining 16 and 17 year olds would be offered an initial dose of the vaccine.

Children under 16 years of age are not currently routinely recommended for vaccination against COVID-19. However, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that some groups of children should be offered vaccination. More information about who is eligible for vaccination is available [here](#).



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The NHS will contact all remaining 16-17-year olds to invite them for vaccination. For those under 16, if a parent or guardian thinks that their child is eligible but has not been contacted by the end of August, they should contact their GP.

Being eligible for vaccination does not mean that your child is considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable or needs to shield.

FAQs

- **Why is my child no longer considered clinically extremely vulnerable but is being offered the vaccine?**
 - The former Deputy Chief Medical Officer of England Professor Jennifer Harries commissioned studies to look at the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. These studies found that, in general, children and young people are at very low risk of becoming seriously unwell from the virus. Their level of risk is similar to that in previous years during winter respiratory virus season.
 - This information was then discussed at an expert panel who recommended that all children and young people should no longer be considered clinically extremely vulnerable and be removed from the Shielded Patient List. This recommendation was presented to the Chief Medical Officers of the UK who agreed with the recommendation.
 - Although they are no longer considered clinically extremely vulnerable, a small number of children may be at higher risk from COVID-19 than other young people. Being eligible for a vaccination means that there are particular benefits to your child from receiving the vaccine. More information on the children that this applies to can be found at: <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#vaccination>
 - The vaccines strategy and the support for clinically extremely vulnerable people are two separate programmes in the Government's response to COVID-19. Being eligible for vaccination does not mean that your child is clinically extremely vulnerable or needs to shield.
 - The latest information on COVID-19 vaccines is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>



- **My 12-15 year old child is eligible for the vaccine, how would I get them the vaccine?**
 - If your child is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, they will be contacted by the NHS to invite them for vaccination.
 - If you think that your child is eligible, but they have not been contacted by the end of August, you should contact their GP.

- **My 12-15 year old does not have any of the conditions listed above— does that mean they won't get the vaccine?**
 - There may be some children who have never been considered as clinically extremely vulnerable but are now eligible for vaccination due to the nature of their medical condition. They will be contacted by the NHS in due course.
 - The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) does not currently recommend vaccinating under-16s without the named health conditions above, but will keep its position under review based on the latest data.
 - The JCVI has advised that all 16 and 17 year olds should now receive their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.
 - If the JCVI changes its recommendation at a later date to widen eligibility in the 12 – 15 age group, your child would be informed of their eligibility and invited for vaccination.
 - The latest information on COVID-19 vaccines is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>

- **Why is my child no longer considered clinically extremely vulnerable but hasn't been offered the vaccine?**
 - The former Deputy Chief Medical Officer of England Professor Jennifer Harries commissioned studies to look at the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. These studies found that in general, children and young people are at very low risk of becoming seriously unwell from the virus. Their level of risk is similar to that in previous years during winter respiratory virus season.
 - This information was then discussed at an expert panel who recommended that all children and young people should no longer be considered CEV and be removed from the Shielded Patient List, the national database of people considered clinically extremely vulnerable. This recommendation was presented to the Chief Medical Officers of the UK who agreed with the recommendation.



- The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has considered the benefits of vaccinating children and young people against the risks that vaccination could pose.
 - Until more data become available, JCVI does not currently advise routine universal vaccination of children and young people under 16 years of age. JCVI will keep this advice under review as more safety and effectiveness information become available on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in children and young people.
 - The latest information on COVID-19 vaccines is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>
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- **My child has been advised to self-isolate or reduce their social contact because of their medical condition or treatment regardless of COVID-19. What should they do now?**
 - Only a very small number of children are advised to reduce their social contact or isolate for reasons other than COVID-19. The vast majority of children previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable should follow the advice in place for the general population.
 - If your child is one of the small group who had been advised by their specialist to isolate or reduce their social contact before the pandemic, you should continue to follow their advice.
 - If your child has recently been diagnosed with a medical condition or has begun a course of treatment that means that they should reduce their social contact or self-isolate, regardless of COVID-19, you should have been informed of this by your child's specialist. You should continue to follow the advice of your child's specialist.
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- **This is confusing, is my child still at risk or not?**
 - We understand that this information can be confusing.
 - The most up-to-date evidence that we have suggests that children and young people face a very low risk of serious illness from COVID-19. This includes children formerly considered clinically extremely vulnerable.
 - As a result, children and young people are no longer considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable and have been removed from the Shielded Patient List.
 - However, if your child has been advised to isolate or reduce their social contact for short periods of time due to the nature of their medical condition or treatment, rather than because of the pandemic, you should continue to follow the advice of your child's specialist.



- Whilst they would still not be considered clinically extremely vulnerable, a small number of children may face a higher risk from COVID-19 than other young people, and therefore vaccination is appropriate for them as a precautionary measure.
- It is important to remember that the whole adult population is now offered vaccination – regardless of individual risk from COVID-19. For children the benefits and risk are less clear cut but the JCVI continues to review the emerging evidence and has already recommended universal vaccination for 16 and 17 year olds.

- **Should I talk to my GP or clinician if I'm worried about my child?**
 - Studies have found that in general, children and young people, including those originally considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable, are at very low risk of becoming seriously unwell from the virus. However, if you have any questions about COVID-19 and how it may impact your child, please visit the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> for more information.
 - If you have any concerns about your child's physical or mental wellbeing you should speak to their GP or clinician who can provide you with advice based on the specific features of your child's medical condition or treatment.

- **What mental health support is available for my child?**
 - NHS mental health services are working as usual and children and young people, their families and carers should ask for specialist help when needed.
 - The NHS has online information on how to access mental health help and support (www.nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/nhs-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/).
 - NHS experts have published blogs with practical tips for young people (www.england.nhs.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-youre-a-young-person-and-its-all-getting-too-much-2/) and families or carers (www.england.nhs.uk/blog/advice-for-parents-guardians-and-carers-on-how-to-support-a-child-or-young-person-if-youre-concerned-about-their-mental-health/)
 - Anyone can visit the Every Mind Matters website for advice and practical steps that can be taken to support wellbeing and manage mental health.
 - If your child is feeling lonely, the Let's Talk Loneliness website also has a variety of tips, advice and further resources that they may find helpful.



- The Hub of Hope can also be accessed to find local sources of mental health support and services, both from the NHS and from other organisations.

- **Can my child go back to school?**
 - All children and young people who were considered as clinically extremely vulnerable should have returned to school following the end of shielding measures on 1 April 2021, unless they are one of the very small number of children under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend. Due to the nature of their condition, these children may have been advised by their clinicians to stay home from school even before the pandemic.
 - It is important that your child continues to attend their school or other educational setting. A lack of schooling is known to have a negative impact on children, reducing their life chances and exacerbating physical and mental health issues.
 - All early years providers, schools and colleges are continuing to put in place measures to help minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare
 - The Government has also made lateral flow tests available to schools and colleges, and to the household members of pupils and staff.

- **Should my child still be taking extra precautions?**
 - As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, it is important that we all use personal judgement to manage our own risk. All of us can play our part by exercising common sense and considering the risks. While no situation is risk free, there are actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us. More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>