

Lewis MacDonald MSP
Convenor
Health and Sport Committee

By Email.

2 November 2020

Dear Lewis

Addition to the shielding list: people with Down's Syndrome and Chronic Kidney Disease stage 5

As you will be aware, at the outset of the pandemic, the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) published a list of six groups where people would be considered to be at the highest clinical risk from COVID-9.

Although shielding was paused on 31 July 2020, the Shielding List is maintained so that the people at the highest clinical risk from COVID-19 can continue to receive targeted advice as the epidemiology changes through the autumn and winter. For this reason, the 4 UK CMOs considered data from QCOVID model to examine whether there is a need to add further conditions to the Shielding List.

The QCOVID model is based on the application of a risk prediction model from Oxford University. This model takes into account a wide range of risk factors now known to increase the risk of infection and serious outcomes from COVID-19 and provides an estimate of absolute and relative risk of catching and dying from COVID-19 during the 97 day period of the first wave in England. This model has been published on the British Medical Journal on 20 October 2020 <https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m3731>

Down's Syndrome

The 4 UK CMOs agreed to that all people aged 18 and over with Down's Syndrome should be included within the definition of highest clinical risk from COVID-19 and therefore added to the Shielding List. Evidence from the QCOVID data shows that there are 4,000 people with Down's Syndrome in the study, of whom 21 died from COVID with a 10-fold increased risk, which is highly statistically significant.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Chronic Kidney Disease stage 5

The Renal Association presented data in April 2020 from the Renal Registry which indicated that dialysis patients were at significantly increased risk from COVID-19, and the UK CMOs elected to add dialysis patients to the Shielding List. Shortly after this decision Kidney Care UK requested that Chronic Kidney Disease Stage 5 also be added to the List. However, this request was declined on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

QCOVID data has now provided the necessary evidence and the UK CMOs have agreed to add people with CKD5 to the Shielding List.

Letters will be issued shortly to those people affected and update guidance for GPs and clinicians.

I will of course, ensure that the Committee is provided with updates in relation to shielding as we continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

JEANE FREEMAN

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

