

National Joint Council for local government services

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**To: Chief Executives in England (additional copy for HR Director)
Chief Executives in Wales and N Ireland (for information)
Members of the National Joint Council**

21 December 2020

Dear Chief Executive,

COVID-19: shielding in tier system (England)

Please continue to visit the LGA's [Coronavirus: information for councils](#) webpage for all up to date advice.

All information contained in this circular is correct at time of publication but all links to external websites should be checked regularly as official advice is likely to be updated as the situation continues to develop.

All previous NJC circulars providing advice and guidance relating to the pandemic are [online](#).

Everyone who can work from home must do so.

Government guidance has been updated to support the [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) in protecting themselves from exposure to COVID-19. It replaces previous guidance on shielding that was in place during the four-week period of national restrictions in November.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people should not go to the workplace if they live or work in [Tier 4 areas](#). In all other tiers, arrangements for home working should be a priority.

Anyone required to travel into an area in a different tier in order to go to work, should follow the guidance for whichever area is in the higher tier. For example, if they live in a *Tier 1: Medium* area but work in a *Tier 2: High* area, they should follow the work advice for *Tier 2: High*. If they live in a *Tier 2: High* area but work in a *Tier 1: Medium* area, they should continue to follow the advice for *Tier 2: High* areas.

Where people in Tiers 1, 2 or 3 cannot work at home, they should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance, with the view of agreeing arrangements for them to attend their workplace as long as it is COVID-Secure. Public sector employees working in essential services, including childcare or education, should continue to go into work.

As advised previously in [NJC circular dated 12 November](#), contact between those who are classed as [clinically vulnerable](#) (including women who are pregnant) and others should be minimised. This should prioritise working at home. Employees who cannot work at home should only attend the workplace if it is [COVID-secure](#). Potential redeployment opportunities could be considered but, again, only to a workplace that is COVID-secure.

If an employee expresses concerns about returning to the workplace it is important that their manager and / or HR ascertains and seeks to address the reason for the concerns and carries out an individual risk assessment. Please refer to [NJC circular dated 12 June](#) for further guidance. If the COVID secure requirements are not met, the employee should not return to work until the appropriate measures are in place and in the meantime should continue to remain at home on normal full pay.

Yours sincerely,

*Naomi
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