**To all colleagues Surrey and Sussex LMCs**

9th November 2020

Dear Colleagues

**Protecting Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) patients, formerly shielding**

Colleagues will recall that in March 2020 a national Shielding List was created, identifying patients who were clinically extremely vulnerable and at high risk of Covid19 infection. Such patients were advised to shield, resulting in significant restrictions that whilst protective were challenging in terms of mental and physical wellbeing.

The shielding restrictions were eased in July, ending on 1st August. Although the Shielding List has been maintained in line with expert advice, and both GPs and specialist colleagues remain able to add and remove patients from the Shielding List, the former resulting in the current NHSE/Government advice letter being sent to patients.

Now a further national lockdown has been announced, GP practices have been sent updated advice on clinically extremely vulnerable patients, enclosed with this letter. In summary this letter:

* **Identified two new cohorts of patients who should be considered clinically extremely vulnerable, these being:**
	+ Adults with Stage 5 chronic kidney disease
	+ Adults (18 years and over) with Downs Syndrome details are in Annex 2 of the GP letter
* In relation to patients with Stage 5 CKD, no action is required by GP practices. Acute Trusts and renal units have been asked to contact such patients. Colleagues should note patients on dialysis or with a renal transplant should already be on the Shielding List.
* In relation to Adults with Downs Syndrome, practices are asked to search their system to identify such patients and then discuss with the patient and/ or family/carer being placed on the Shielding List – support material to assist with this is referenced in the letter practices have received. Colleagues should note that unlike previous shielding cohorts, no national search to identify such patients is being undertaken.
* **Reviewing children and young people who remain on the Shielding List** : this process commenced in August, based on the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health [RCPCH] guidance which identified that most such patients were not appropriate for the Shielding List, on-going reviews have confirmed this.

Parents and guardians of children and young people still on the Shielding List will receive a letter during November recommending this is reviewed, and asking them to contact their usual specialist, or GP (if not currently receiving specialist care) to enable this. GPs who are uncertain whether not remaining on the Shielding List is appropriate can contact a specialist for advice, and specialists have been asked to support GPs in making these decisions.

GPs who do after review decide to remove a child or young person from the Shielding List should follow the recommended process for doing so, which includes an age-appropriate discussion with their parent and/or family/carer. Full details are in Annex 1 of the GP letter

* **Updated guidance for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable: the update information is available at:**

Although this is not a return to the very restrictive guidance earlier in the year, such patients are advised [but not legally required to follow] additional precautionary measures to reduce their risk. The letter represents a formal shielding notification and as such is evidence to employees that such patients cannot outside home until 2nd December; this includes evidence for SSP [ Statutory Sick Pay] purposes.

The letter emphasises that the NHS remains open, and that patients should attend healthcare appointments. Those living in the same household, but who are not themselves clinically extremely vulnerable, do not need to follow CEV advice and, in particular, children should still attend school.

The NHS Volunteer Responder service remains operational and local councils have support services in place. The patient letter gives details of email and phone details to access this type of support.

I hope this background information is helpful; please contact the LMC office with any queries.

With best wishes

Dr Julius Parker

**Chief Executive**