

STAFF SHIELDING – REFERENCE Q&A

With more staff now shielding due to lockdown, STAC has collected the various different pieces of guidance on this subject into one reference document.

The most up to date guidance on the lockdown and the restrictions in place is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

The Q&A covering the terms and conditions issues associated with risk assessment is available [here](#).

Advice around shielding and vaccination can be found [here](#).

Q. What terms and conditions should be applied when a staff member is “shielding”?

A. People in very high risk groups identified on the [NHS Inform website](#) will have received a letter from NHS Scotland. The letter, as well as confirming that they have a condition which puts them at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, will strongly advise them to practice shielding as a protective measure. “Shielding” means not leaving home and minimising contact with other people.

When staff confirm to their employer that they are in this category and are therefore shielding, an assessment should be done to determine whether they can undertake all or some of their duties working from home, or be transferred to duties which can be undertaken at home. The degree to which someone is able to work in these circumstances will vary on a case by case basis, and some may not be able to do any work at all. Regardless of the outcome of the assessment, staff in this situation should be paid as if at work until the shielding period has been formally withdrawn.

Q. How should staff absences related to shielding be recorded?

A. Staff absences in situations where staff have received letters advising them to shield and cannot work in an alternative way, such as from home, should not count towards triggers and should be recorded under the “Coronavirus – Underlying Health Condition” category.

Q. What about bank workers in very high risk categories who have letters advising them to shield?

A. STAC is conscious that there will be bank staff who work regularly and fall into one of the very high risk categories set out in the [NHS Inform guidance](#), for whom shielding is recommended. People employed via a staff bank are “as and when required” workers, and as such they are not entitled to any protections in respect of their income. Where a person on the staff bank is unable to take up their allocated shifts because they fall into one of the groups referred to above, we do not want them to suffer an unfair disadvantage.

STAC would therefore advise Boards to continue to pay people in this situation, based on average income over a 12 week reference period preceding the point at

which it became clear that they should not be working. Staff should be encouraged to bring it to the attention of their employer if they find themselves unable to accept shifts because they are shielding, as recommended in the NHS Inform guidance.