



The Falkland Islands Government

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Letter from the Chief Medical Officer concerning clinically extremely vulnerable or high-risk people

As we move towards the relaxation of our borders, and start to see COVID-19 enter our community, it is understandable that some people will feel anxious and scared about what this will mean for them. This fear may be heightened if you feel that you are at increased risk, because of a medical condition that you have, or treatments that you take.

In the past, you may have received a letter identifying you as someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) or high-risk, and you may have been advised to shield during early stages of the pandemic, back in early 2020.

Most people who were previously identified as high-risk or CEV are now well protected, having received their primary and booster vaccination doses. Equally, most people who were identified as high-risk or CEV back in 2020, are no longer at greater risk than the general population, which means you are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else on staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

There is no longer separate guidance for people previously identified as high-risk or CEV, although we recommend that anyone with an underlying health condition takes care to avoid routine coughs, colds and other respiratory viruses. Good hand hygiene and social distancing, where possible, remains important.

Everyone is strongly advised to get vaccinated, including pregnant women. If you have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine, you should get vaccinated. Evidence indicates that completing a primary course of COVID-19 vaccination provides very effective protection against hospitalisation. To maintain this high level of protection you should also get a booster vaccine for COVID-19 when this is offered to you.

There are a small number of people who, in spite of vaccination, are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. This is usually due to a weakened immune system or another specific medical condition. This small group may require additional vaccinations and may be asked to shield if required in the future. Everyone in this group will be notified directly by the hospital, and will be advised as to what they need to do when we have COVID-19 in the community. **Unless you have been contacted by the hospital and directly identified as being in this group, then you should continue to follow the same guidance as the general public on staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19.**

If you remain concerned, or if you have issues or worries about your physical or mental health, please contact the KEMH.

Dr Rebecca Edwards