



BRITISH CONGENITAL CARDIAC ASSOCIATION

## **BCCA Statement: Extremely Vulnerable CHD patients beyond the UK Government defined groups (8 April 2020)**

BCCA is aware that differing advice is being given to patients by different CHD centres as to who may be considered 'extremely vulnerable' to COVID 19. In the absence of direct evidence of the effect of the virus in different CHD lesions, at different ages, such differences may be expected as each clinician uses their best clinical judgement to advise patients. Such judgements must balance the benefits of shielding against the restrictions on activity and household contact that flow from following the UK Government shielding guidance (which can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

We do not expect any change to the original patient categories contained in the Government's advice. However, where a clinician advises a patient that they are extremely vulnerable and should follow shielding advice, a formal process has now been agreed by which such patients can be added to the list of patients shielding and able to access the support provided.

### **NHS England advice on adding patients to the registry of extremely vulnerable patients**

NHS England is aware that clinicians have identified a number of patients/patient groups that they consider should be in the COVID-19 clinically highest risk category. Once a clinician has identified additional patients to be added to the clinically highest risk registry, they should arrange for them to be sent a copy of the patient letter (see attached) and they should inform their Trust's named COVID-19 lead. This is done on a patient by patient basis. NHS Digital will be in touch with every Trust COVID-19 lead about the on-going process for transferring this information to the central registry. Patients are being added to the central database/registry all the time and there may be a slight delay between a patient being added to that database and being recognised by the website/support phone line as someone who is eligible for support.

While such advice will necessarily need to be tailored to the individual patient, based on the views of centres across the country, the following patient groups could be at greater risk of complications from COVID 19 and all centres may wish to review their advice to such patients:

- Fontan, single ventricle physiology, especially with evidence of 'failure', and or end organ damage
- Persistent cyanosis
- Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH) especially those on pulmonary vasodilator therapy
- Severe and or symptomatic heart failure, particularly those on heart failure therapy

**BCCA , 8 April 2020**