

COVID-19: What is the difference between someone who is self-isolating, shielding and social distancing and which are entitled to SSP?

There is a difference between someone who is shielding, self-isolating and social distancing, each has their own separate government guidance and how an individual should be paid if they are unable to work is determined by which category they fall within.

<p>Self-Isolating</p>	<p>This is where, in line with government rules, someone is required to stay at home due to suspected Coronavirus i.e. the individual or someone they live with has CV symptoms and/or has tested positive. If someone is self-isolating they are not permitted to attend the workplace (or go anywhere) and must stay at home. If they can't do their job from home therefore they should be on sick leave and pay, which can be SSP if that is what their contract provides. Self-isolation usually only lasts 14 days unless the person continues to be unwell with CV symptoms. The guidance around self-isolation can be found here.</p>
<p>Shielding</p>	<p>This applies to those who are “clinically extremely vulnerable”. Individuals in this group will have received an NHS letter or been told by their GP that they are in this group. Note that over 70s or pregnant women, for example, are not automatically in this category. This guidance sets out examples of who might be in this group (it includes, for example, people with cancer receiving chemo). Those who are shielding are “strongly advised” to stay at home so should not be attending work and will be entitled to sick pay if they cannot work from home which will be SSP if that is what their contract provides.</p>
<p>Social distancing</p>	<p>This is anyone who is not self-isolating and not shielding as set out above. Such individuals are permitted to attend work relatively as normal if they are unable to perform their role from home and their workplace is able to remain open, subject to social distancing measures in place. If someone in this category does not want to attend work because they are fearful of the risk to their health then the employer should take a risk based approach. If they are not in a high risk category and you are comfortable the safety measures you have in place are consistent with government guidance, but they still refuse to attend work you could potentially place them on zero pay. If your risk assessment determines the risk as too high and you require them to remain at home then that should be on full pay unless they agree otherwise. Individuals in this group are not entitled to SSP. Within this category there is the sub-category of “clinically vulnerable people” which does include over 70s and pregnant women (for example). The guidance states they should “take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household”. This does not however entitle them to SSP but you should exercise extra caution with risk assessments and determining how to pay them if they do not want to attend work but you require them to. The guidance for social distancing is available here.</p>

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