



Covid-19 - Shielding a Vulnerable Person

Further to Bulletin 67, members have reported problems with accessing the link to the agreed text on Covid 19 and shielding of 'extremely vulnerable' people. This may have caused some confusion around what has been jointly agreed with BT. In order to clarify this we have set out below the full agreed text of the process to be followed when shielding an extremely vulnerable person.

The Union nationally has been in consultation with BT Group to try and resolve the recent confusion associated with the carers of extremely vulnerable people and shielding process.

For anyone who lives with an extremely vulnerable person, family member or child and feels that they need to be at home then the criteria below should be used.

In the first instance, you should raise the issue with your direct line manager and provide them with the evidence detailed below. You will be able to agree how you can protect the safety and wellbeing of extremely vulnerable people you live with.

If you cannot resolve the matter with your manager, you should seek advice from your local CWU Branch Office.

Anyone identified as high risk should follow Public Health England or Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland equivalent guidance to shield. BT are asking all members to be as flexible as possible by considering options such as:

- Working from home
- Consider whether it would be best to take annual leave (as detailed in the criteria below)
- Changing attendance patterns or the nature of work

Where this cannot be achieved any BT Group employee who is unable to work will be supported to stay at home and shield. In these circumstances BT Group will:

- Continue to pay you in full for the days that you need to stay at home during the shielding period. This will be a combination of special leave and annual leave (as per the section below).
- This time will not count as sick leave.

BT Group will ask for you to provide evidence that demonstrates you have no reasonable alternative but to shield, so you will need to share any relevant documentation. Examples of documentation include a letter from the government or a letter from your GP.

The link below gives you more information and advice on shielding.

<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>

Whilst you are shielding you should;

- Stay in touch with your manager throughout your isolation period.
- Work from home where possible.
- Continue to consider whether there's another way BT can support you to continue working e.g. where work becomes available through rebalancing of CFU priorities, which enables you to work from home

The annual leave criteria is;

For every 4 complete consecutive weeks paid special leave that you take due to the coronavirus situation, you'll need to take 2 of these days as annual leave (pro-rated for part timers). This is broadly your pro-rated monthly annual leave entitlement and is a condition of the paid special leave being approved. So, a colleague taking 0-3 weeks paid special leave would have 0 annual leave days deducted, someone taking 4-7 weeks paid special leave would have 2 annual leave days deducted, and someone with 8 - 11 weeks would have 4 days deducted etc

Depending on the absence system you're using, record the absence as follows...

-**Fusion HR system** - paid special leave. In the comments give 'coronavirus (self-isolation)' as a reason.

-**IEX- Self-isolate** - Paid Leave

-**Kronos** – Self-isolation - Virus isolation

-**ESS/MSS** – Paid Leave

BT Group does not expect you to book the annual leave days, the last 2 days of each 4 week special leave period will be recorded as holiday and adjusted in the system automatically on your return to work.

Dave Jukes

Assistant Secretary