

Over half a million food packages delivered to those at risk

- Government hits milestone one month on from launching unprecedented support package for the country's most clinically vulnerable people
- Working together with local leaders and the food industry, government has formed an unprecedented alliance to ensure vulnerable people get the supplies that they need
- Social media highlights the range of people being supported by food boxes

Over 500,000 boxes of essential food have now been delivered by wholesalers to those at highest risk across the country with hundreds of thousands more packages to follow in the coming weeks, Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP today (Sunday 26 April) confirmed.

The milestone was surpassed a month after the Government launched its shielding programme – an unprecedented package of support for those most at risk of catching coronavirus. As part of this the Government partnered with national food distributors – Brakes and Bidfood – to get these supplies delivered to people's doorsteps.

The effort has also seen a partnership forged between central government and local agencies that is helping to support clinically extremely vulnerable residents through the coronavirus outbreak, delivering a programme on a scale not seen since the Second World War.

These partnerships – known as Local Resilience Forums – were put in place across the whole country by the Communities Secretary to manage the local response to this national emergency.

There are around 1.85 million people with underlying severe health conditions that must be protected and have been asked to stay at home and shield.

Many have local family and friends who can get the vital provisions needed. For those without, the Government has committed to providing the support they need, for as long as they need it.

Communities Secretary of State Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This is very challenging time for those having to be shielded from the coronavirus. I said at the start of this national emergency that whilst people need to spend more time at home, we would make

sure that they never felt alone and I've been pleased to hear that our food packages are helping make life that bit easier.

We have already delivered over half a million food packages to the most vulnerable and we will be delivering hundreds of thousands more food packages in the coming weeks.

I want to relay my own personal thanks to all those delivering these packages to communities around the country led by the local alliance we have put in place. They are among the many unsung heroes are working alongside councils and volunteers to support those who need it most.

Those receiving food packages have taken to social media to share personal messages of thanks and appreciation to the drivers and authorities working to deliver the packages.

Those who took to social media included:

- The father of a disabled girl who is high risk also gave thanks, saying he felt [lucky to live in the UK](#)
- [Kaydyn](#), a five-year-old shielding with cystic fibrosis who sent a video message to the Communities Secretary when he received his first food box
- [Tanya Louise](#), undergoing treatment for cancer, who posted a video blog 'unboxing' her first food parcel
- Good Morning Britain weatherman Alex Beresford, who posted a heartfelt [message of thanks](#) for the support his shielding mother has received, including one of the Government's food boxes.
- Many comments included a special thanks to wholesalers Brakes and Bidfood and their drivers

What's in the box?

The box contains a week's worth of essentials for one person. While the contents of the parcels may have slight variation (depending on stock), they contain items such as:

- Tinned vegetables – as well as tinned tomatoes – tinned fruit,

multipacks of soup and baked beans, and a jar of cooking sauce. Other tins will contain meat and tuna.

- Store cupboard staples such as pasta, rice or noodles or cous cous, potatoes and cereal.
- Bread and fresh fruit.
- Coffee, tea and biscuits.
- Toilet paper and shower gel.

Local Resilience Forums

Headed by the most senior of local leaders these local partnerships bring together members of the emergency services, councils, the NHS and others to lead their communities through this crisis with the full support of central government.

Recognising this unprecedented challenge, the Communities Secretary took the decision to embed some of the finest military planners in the world within these groups.

This combined expertise and leadership is ensuring a comprehensive, coordinated and consistent response across the country.

Further updates on the shielding programme:

- Up to 200,000 calls a day are being made to the shielded, and councils are helping to support them in other ways – including organising regular calls from volunteers to those isolated.
- In addition, Chris Townsend OBE has been appointed to lead the huge cross-government effort to support and protect the most vulnerable during this difficult time.
- Wholesalers Brakes and Bidfood are working with the government to make this happen performing a critical role with front line staff packaging and delivering care packages to vulnerable people across the UK
- On Sunday 22 March, we published [guidance for the most at-risk group](#), or 'clinically extremely vulnerable', on shielding and how they can protect themselves from coronavirus.
- Expert doctors in England have identified specific medical conditions

that, based on what we know about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

- People who are clinically extremely vulnerable to the Covid 19 virus fall within one or more of these categories:
- Solid organ transplant recipients.
- People with specific cancers:
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
- people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.
- The conditions that mean you are on the shielded list are kept under review and people can be added based on clinical decisions by their GP

or specialist.

- People have been advised to shield until the end of June and government is keeping that under review.
- The contents of the box were put together in consultation with nutritionists and industry groups, but there are some limitations around what could be included. For example, due to packing and delivery logistics the boxes can only contain items that can be stored at room temperature. That is why there are more tinned goods and longer lasting fruit such as apples or pears.