

Shielding guidance must be reviewed every 3 weeks

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The Scottish Conservatives are calling for shielding advice to be formally reviewed every three weeks, similar to the lockdown reviews currently undertaken by the SNP government.

Yesterday the First Minister announced that shielding Scots must follow strict guidelines until the end of July.

This vulnerable group will be allowed to leave the house for exercise from the 18th June onwards, when the next lockdown review takes place, but will not be able to meet anyone from another household in the open air, even if they currently live alone.

This blanket ban has been implemented despite the SNP's own new guidance stating "the chance of catching the virus when you are outdoors, keeping two metres away from anyone else and not meeting with other people is very low."

Restrictions for shielded individuals have been relaxed elsewhere in the UK, with those living alone already allowed to exercise and socialise outdoors.

This call comes as Scotland has recorded no new deaths from Covid for the last two days.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

"This vulnerable group has already been shielding for months and further isolation until the end of July without any chance of review, is increasingly difficult for them to bear.

"Of course we want to keep vulnerable people safe, but Scotland has recorded no new deaths from Covid for two days now and even the scientists agree that the chance of catching the virus outdoors, with social distancing, is very low.

"Shielding guidance must be formally reviewed every three weeks, just like lockdown reviews, as both are informed by scientific advice.

"The rest of the UK has already relaxed these guidelines significantly, it seems strange that the Scottish guidelines are so restrictive.

"In some cases, where people live alone, the lack of direct human contact must be severely affecting.

"Many shielded people will find the thought of another seven weeks of total

lockdown without any reappraisal or explanation particularly tough.”