**WIGAN LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE**

Dear Patient

Covid 19 -Vulnerable persons ; Government ‘pause’ of shielding –return to work.

The Government has decided to go ahead with it intended ‘pause ‘ of the shielding requirements for persons whose medical condition(s), age and other circumstances make them highly vulnerable should they become infected by COVID19. From 1 August, those deemed at highest risk from COVID19 could be called back to work if

* it is not possible for them to work from home and
* it is deemed essential by the employer that they return. and
* the employer can provide a ‘ Covid secure ‘ workplace. It is the responsibility of the employer to demonstrate that the workplace is ‘covid19’ safe.

This advice note has been prepared by the Sefton Local medical Committee\* on behalf of your GP/Practice.

Your GP is unable to provide fit notes and individual letters to confirm whether it is safe for patients who are in the Vulnerable group to return to work or not. GPs have no independent knowledge of workplace risks or measure put in place to minimise them. Such an assessment is an occupational health matter and is the responsibility of the employer to obtain.

The principal obligation is upon Employers to undertake a return to work risk assessment of vulnerable/shielding workers who cannot work from home, and determine whether the COVID19 risk reduction measures they have put in place provides a safe environment for them to return

Vulnerable persons who are asked to return to work are entitled to see the outcome of the risk assessment which has been undertaken.

The Health and Safety Executive has provided clear guidance on an Employers responsibility in connection with the ‘pause’ of shielding

‘When shielding is paused, where it is not possible for workers to work from home, you must regularly review your risk assessment, and do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect those workers from harm’.

You may find the following sources of guidance helpful-

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/vulnerable-people-and-high-risk>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/protect-people.htm>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

You can also obtain guidance from your Trades Union of you re a member or the Citizens Advice Bureaux.- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Yours faithfully

Joe chattin

Honorary Secretary

Wigan Local medical Committee

\*The Local Medical Committee is a statutory body which advises and represents GPs in the Wigan Borough

Website: <http://wiganlmc.org.uk/>