

# Cystic

# Fibrosis a fight we must win

Rishi Sunak MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

27 March 2020

Dear Mr Sunak

## **Financial support for extremely vulnerable people and carers shielding from COVID-19**

As the Coronavirus pandemic escalates, we need the most appropriate provisions in place for those most at risk from this deadly virus.

People with cystic fibrosis are included in guidance for people who are extremely vulnerable to severe illness from COVID-19. Cystic fibrosis itself is a severe, progressive, and life-limiting condition. Last year, the median age at death in the UK was only 32, with the primary cause of mortality being respiratory failure.

There is a risk that the effect of COVID-19 for people with cystic fibrosis with poor lung function could be devastating. We support shielding guidance for those most vulnerable to this virus to happen without delay.

However, we are concerned that the guidance for extremely vulnerable people, to minimise interactions with others and remain home, could have catastrophic consequences for the finances of people with cystic fibrosis and carers. Members of our Community are deeply concerned about managing the financial implications of shielding, such as how they may immediately access financial support when no longer working. This uncertainty can put people with cystic fibrosis, or their carers, in the awful dilemma of continuing to work while fearful that they are endangering either themselves or someone in their household.

We do not feel that the latest measures offer the financial support to households with extremely vulnerable individuals, who are expected to follow shielding guidance immediately. We ask that as a matter of urgency you consider further steps, for example, an enhanced and more flexible carers' allowance to support those looking after the most vulnerable, to manage the increased demands of their role.

In such a difficult period for everyone, we share your sentiment that we all should be doing whatever it takes to protect the most vulnerable in society from this virus. We strongly urge you to make financial provisions available to households that include an extremely vulnerable person, supporting them to carry out shielding guidance more effectively and without delay.

Yours sincerely,



David Ramsden  
**Chief Executive**