

Arlene Foster
Room 310
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont, Belfast
BT4 3XX

27 March 2020

Dear Ms Foster,

Support plans in place for people with cystic fibrosis who are socially shielding

As the Coronavirus pandemic escalates, people with cystic fibrosis have been listed as 'extremely vulnerable people' by the UK government and have been advised to socially shield for at least twelve weeks.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a life-shortening, progressive, genetic condition. It causes a build-up of thick sticky mucus that causes severe, irreversible damage to the lungs and digestive system, making it hard to breathe and to digest food.

It is important that, whilst people with cystic fibrosis are shielding, they are able to access the goods and services they need to stay well. Due to difficulties digesting food, people with cystic fibrosis must take digestive enzymes whenever they eat to help them get the nutrients they need from food. They also require a high-fat, high-calorie diet in order to stay as healthy as possible and help fight the infections that can damage their lungs and shorten their lives. In addition to this, they spend hours each day on treatment and running low on medicines is potentially life-threatening.

The current guidance, means that people with cystic fibrosis can't currently leave their homes to shop for food or for any other purpose. For others living in the same household doing so increases the risk of them potentially passing on the virus to the person with cystic fibrosis they live with, which could have devastating consequences.

I am writing to ask that the Northern Ireland Government ensures that people with cystic fibrosis are supported during this difficult time to ensure that they can continue to access essential supplies, such as, food and medicine and avoid financial hardship.

Yours sincerely,



David Ramsden
Chief Executive