[Insert your name and address here –

this is important to let your MP

know that you are a constituent]

[Insert date here]

Dear [Insert your MP’s name],

**Re: Support for people with blood cancer and blood disorders**

While society enjoys increasing freedoms from the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, people with blood cancer and blood disorders are being left behind.

Over a year into the pandemic, there is still no end in sight for many shielding patients with blood cancer or a blood disorder. I am writing to ask for your help ensuring that this group of vulnerable people are provided with the support they need to continue shielding.

Currently, there is very little certainty over how effective the COVID-19 vaccine is in people with a blood condition. Yet this group is amongst the most vulnerable from infection with the virus.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Every day, patients are faced with tough choices about if and how they can return to work and public spaces while remaining extremely vulnerable to the virus. For this group, there is no “return to normality”.

Anthony Nolan’s latest patient survey shows that:

* 42% of patients surveyed are unlikely to stop shielding – potentially equating to up to 110,000 people with blood cancer across the UK.
* 44% of patients surveyed have no idea when they might feel safe enough to stop shielding, while almost one in 10 (8%) think it could be a year or longer.
* One in five respondents (22%) are financially worse offsince the start of the pandemic.
* Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents have worse mental health and wellbeing than before the pandemic.

We are asking the government to take the following steps to ensure that the needs of people with blood cancer and blood disorders are not forgotten:

* Fund research into the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment options for people with blood cancer and blood disorders.
* Offer people who are immunocompromised access to routine antibody testing to help them make better informed decisions.
* Continue supermarket priority delivery slots for vulnerable patients.
* Ensure that anyone who wants to keep shielding can access financial support (like Employment and Support Allowance and Statutory Sick Pay) without having to go through an arduous process now that shielding has ended.
* Keep the furlough scheme open beyond September for people who are clinically vulnerable.
* Provide dedicated mental health support and signposting for everyone who needs to keep shielding.

These steps will help make sure people with blood cancer or a blood disorder get the protection, support and treatment they need. I hope that I can count on your support.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your name]

1. Abi Vijenthira *et al*; Outcomes of patients with hematologic malignancies and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis of 3377 patients. Blood 2020; 136 (25): 2881–2892. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1182/blood.2020008824> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)