



Project Summary

Identifying support needs for rheumatology patients following COVID-19 shielding

Dr William Tillett - £19766.00

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK Government advised many people with rheumatic conditions to 'shield' because they were at high risk of becoming seriously ill or dying. People report that shielding had negative effects on many aspects of their lives, including their mood, anxiety, physical fitness, and how they manage their health. Now that shielding support is over, we want to know how people are moving on. We are calling this 'unshielding'. We want to understand the challenges of unshielding and what would help people to recover their physical and mental health.

To find this out, we will speak to around 30 people who are unshielding, either by telephone, video call or in person. We will analyse our discussions to understand how people are coping, the challenges that they face and the help that they would like from rheumatology teams and patient organisations. We will make recommendations and share what we find out with rheumatology teams, researchers, patients and people who manage healthcare services. We think that asking people about their experiences will help us learn lessons if people must shield again, improve rheumatology healthcare and understand how to support people during difficult times in the future.