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# COMMUNITY SHOPPING

We are seeing many communities and individuals volunteering to support friends, families and neighbours during the COVID-19 outbreak, by offering to do their shopping.

This is a much-valued service, for which we are all grateful, especially those who are in isolation. This advice note is designed to help you to do this safely.

## **Before offering to help with shopping**

It is important that you follow the national guidance on social distancing to protect yourself and others, especially older and medically vulnerable adults.

Firstly, consider if you can volunteer to do someone's shopping at this time.

**DO NOT** volunteer if:

- you have symptoms of COVID-19 (a fever or new continuous cough)
- you should be self-isolating or part of a family who should be isolating
- you are in a group being 'strongly advised' to socially (physically) distance themselves from others, or you have been told to shield because you are extremely vulnerable.

If you're able to help out, consider whether or not you will do this informally (e.g. providing your contact details and offer of support to family, friends and neighbours) or through coordinated groups for example a local COVID-19 Mutual Aid or Neighbourhood Groups.

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## **Agreeing the shopping list**

- Make a list of all the items they have asked you to buy. Let the person know that you will try to get all the items requested however in the current situation some of the items may not be available.
- If you need to consider substitutes, are you aware if the person or other household members have any allergies or are there foods they should not have because they may interact adversely with medications? What sort of cooking and food storage facilities do they have? Would they be able to open tins/jars for example?

## **Buying the shopping**

- Consider where you will do the shopping. Is there an opportunity to support local businesses? Could they arrange for payment via telephone? Think about the person and their income – do you need to shop within a specific budget that will influence where you shop?
- Consider others whilst shopping. Follow the advice on how to reduce your risk of catching or spreading the illness. Always keep 2 metres away from other people, including at the check-out.
- Do not buy high-demand items in bulk – only buy what is needed.
- It may be important to keep a record of what has been bought and the cost (e.g. can you take a photo of the receipt and keep a record of any money that is exchanged?).

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## **Paying for the shopping**

- When a person contacts you to ask if you can do shopping, you should discuss how the shopping will be paid for.
- Use online or telephone payment options where possible (so the person can pay directly themselves – this will also minimise the need to touch money).
- If you are paying for items yourself, use contactless payment options where you can.
- If you need to handle money, ensure you and the person you are helping wash your hands before and after touching it.

## **Transporting and delivering the shopping**

- For food hygiene purposes, ensure frozen food doesn't thaw before reaching the person's house. Remind them that the items need to go in the freezer immediately if they are not planning to consume the food straight away.
- For food that should be refrigerated - raw/cooked meat -don't allow it to get too hot whilst being transported and make sure it is back in a fridge within 2 hours of picking it from the shelf.
- When delivering the shopping to the person, we strongly advise that volunteers do not enter homes and keep a 2-metre distance from the person you are helping.

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# COMMUNITY SHOPPING

## Transporting and delivering the shopping cont'd/...

- Agree a time and safe place to leave the shopping and ensure the person knows it is there. Where this is not possible (e.g. where a person is physically not able to carry their own shopping into the house/lift bags onto the worktop), wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser before and after entering the house.
- Consider wearing disposable gloves and change them between deliveries if it is difficult to wash your hands regularly. Alternatively, if sanitiser, hand washing facilities and gloves are not available, carry liquid hand soap, bottled water (preferably warm), paper towels and a bag for disposal, so you can wash your hands remotely.
- Wash your hands before and after each delivery. It is also recommended that the person receiving the shopping wash their hands after bringing the shopping into the house and after packing it away.
- If you are part of an organised group delivering shopping and you are not known to the person you are delivering shopping to, consider use of a 'safe word' agreed with the person in advance, that you can use to provide reassurance if required. Double check you are leaving food at the correct house.

**Be cautious about providing your personal contact details to clients - be guided by the organisation you are volunteering for.**