

Supporting others in your community during COVID-19

Guidance for Volunteers

Shopping for people who are self-isolating, family-isolating or social-distancing

This guidance has been developed through the COVID-19 Cumbria Community Resilience Group.

It aims to compliment national Government COVID-19 guidance and support the community response to COVID-19 locally where further information is required.

This guidance will be reviewed regularly.

We are seeing many communities and individuals volunteering to support friends, families and neighbours during the COVID-19 outbreak. They are providing an important and much valued service, which we are all grateful for. We hope the following information will help volunteers to feel informed whilst carrying out this great work.

IMPORTANT

- It is important that you do all you can to follow the national guidance on 'social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults', which can be found [here](#).
- It is also important that you follow the advice on [protecting yourself and others](#) at all times. Spread only kindness, not COVID-19.

FURTHER ADVICE

- Firstly, consider if you are able to 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.

The guidance accessed via the 'IMPORTANT' section above provides definitions for self-isolation, family-isolation and social distancing.

- If you are able to volunteer at this time, consider whether or not you will do this very informally (e.g. communicating your contact details and offer of support to family, friends and neighbours) or through a coordinated volunteering group e.g. Support Cumbria are looking for a number of volunteers to support local charities and organisations work in local communities. Go to SupportCumbria.org.uk if you would like to volunteer or you are a group/organisation looking for additional volunteers.

PLEASE DO NOT ENCOURAGE VULNERABLE PEOPLE TO DISPLAY REQUESTS FOR HELP VIA NOTES OR CARDS IN THEIR WINDOWS/DOORS. Criminals can take advantage of this.

- 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. Consider if the person has any memory difficulties. 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?).
- Consider where you will do the shopping. Is there a chance to support local business? 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. Keep 2 metres away from other people at all times, including at the check-out.
- Do not buy high-demand items in bulk – only buy what is needed.
- 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 with medications? What sort of cooking and food storage facilities do they have? Would they be able to open tins/jars for example?
- Transporting shopping – for food hygiene purposes, ensure any frozen food does not thaw before reaching the person's house (and check the person places in the freezer immediately if they are not planning to consume to food immediately). For food that should be refrigerated, such as raw/cooked meat; do not allow it to get too hot whilst being transport and make sure it is back in a fridge within two hours of picking from the shelf.

- Delivering shopping to the person – where possible, we strongly advise volunteers not to enter homes. Keep a 2 metre distance from the person you are helping.

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.

If you need to handle money, ensure you and the person you are helping wash your hands before and after touching it.

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 also 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.

Thank you for your support.