**Factsheet 12: Volunteer Guidelines for Shopping and picking up prescriptions**

**I am doing shopping, what should I know?**

Here are a few basic precautions for handling shopping that could help keep everyone safe. Give volunteers clear, concise written instructions – ideally a single A4 sheet that they can read through before each task.

1. Never leave your home to volunteer if you are displaying symptoms of coronavirus, or if you are in a high-risk group.
2. Wash hands thoroughly (for 20 seconds with soap and water) before and after deliveries. When out and about keep a bottle of alcohol hand sanitiser to hand.
3. Check the safety of the products delivered. Check any packaging is sealed and the temperature of the product on delivery e.g. If it’s meant to be frozen, is it still frozen?
4. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. If no tissue, cough and sneeze into the crook of your arm.
5. Volunteers should ensure they have a low chance of becoming infected. Where possible follow social distancing protocol and don’t take unnecessary risks.
6. Public transport should be avoided where possible. In cases where taking public transport is unavoidable, disinfection of the items delivered should be carried out.
7. Take care when handling any items which may be given to people who may have compromised immune systems. The virus can live on hard surfaces for up to 72 hours.
8. Don’t go into any houses. Leave food/goods outside the doorstep. Communicate to the person in isolation that you have delivered via message or phone call. Get a confirmation that the person has received it before you leave.
9. Recommend that recipients wash shopping wherever possible and wash their hands after touching it.
10. Don’t accept gifts or payments.
11. Be kind and courteous to the person you are supporting, especially if they are distressed, but don’t offer or agree to do other tasks for them; always refer them back to the central contact number.
12. Do not give medical advice; always refer people to official sources such as www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
13. Disinfect any surface that will be touched by the person you are delivering to.

**We are picking up prescriptions, what should we know?**

Some of the prescriptions that volunteers may end up collecting have a potentially high street value. This means that it’s possible people will want to steal them in order to sell them on. The danger of harm is likely to be high if someone doesn’t receive the medication they need. As such, this a high-risk activity and should only be done if these precautions are followed;

1. Don’t give this task to newly recruited volunteers who you don’t have a trusted relationship with.
2. Volunteers collecting prescriptions should message organisers when they have collected prescriptions.
3. Volunteers should message organisers again when they have delivered prescriptions.
4. Organisers should message the requester to confirm they have had their delivery before deleting the request.
5. If you collect a prescription, do not advise on doses, preparation or administration of medication even if you have a relevant qualification. This should only be done by the prescriber.
6. The same is true of over-the-counter medications, such as paracetamol and ibruprofen. No advice should be given by volunteers, no matter what you’ve read. The person requesting over-the-counter meds must take all responsibility for their request. If over-the-counter, only buy and deliver the maximum amount which can be purchased by one person (ie only 16 paracetamols. If they need more then this should be prescribed).
7. Don’t provide a panic buying service for paracetamols, pasta or anything else.