

# **Guidelines for voluntary groups for the safe distribution and delivery of food during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic**



## **Essential actions:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water before starting work and frequently through your shift. This should take at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitiser gel for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitiser needs to have an alcohol content of at least 60%.
- Always wash your hands after you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, and after you eat or handle food.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) if you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the bin immediately, and wash your hands straight away afterwards.
- All volunteers must ensure they abide by social distancing, and house hold isolation rules to minimise the likelihood of becoming infected themselves and infectious to others.
- At all times follow social distancing protocol: try to keep 2 metres away from each other.
- Wash your hands immediately on returning to your home.

## **You must not:**

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Distribute food to other people in the community if you have symptoms (fever or dry persistent cough).

## **Receiving and checking food:**

- Organise the workspace so that it minimises lifting and carrying operations as much as possible. Handle and store products so that they do not become trip hazards.
- The safest food to handle is pre-packaged food that does not require chilled storage e.g. tinned food, dried goods such as pasta or rice, or fresh produce such as fruit or vegetables, not prepared salads or mixes.

- Check products on receipt to ensure packaging is intact and undamaged thus reducing the likelihood of contamination from foreign objects, pests, etc.
- Where necessary, sacks of bulk, low risk dry goods can be decanted into new/clean plastic Ziploc bags or containers. Seal and label with the product name, **best before date** from original pack and list any **allergens**.
- Food bags or containers must be suitable for food use and be stored in a clean, pest proof place.
- Before handling any open food, even low risk food, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds and dry them thoroughly, ideally using single use paper towels. Frequent and effective hand washing is usually better than using gloves.
- Ensure there are sufficient facilities to allow frequent and effective hand washing.
- Avoid as much as possible using shared spaces such as kitchens and WCs at the same time to maintain effective social distancing. Ensure these facilities are cleaned regularly.
- WHO advice suggests that food packaging is not known to present a specific risk as a pathway for Covid-19 infection, however efforts should be made to ensure it is cleaned and handled in line with usual food safety practices designed to avoid cross contamination with bacteria and allergens.

## **Delivering food to homes**

Clean and disinfect any reusable containers used to deliver food.

There should only be one person per delivery vehicle.

Avoid going into people's homes if possible. Leave food/goods outside on the doorstep. Let the person in isolation know that you are delivering soon via message or phone call. Keep a 2 metre distance when/if they open the door. A handy tip is to tell people expecting home deliveries to keep some shopping bags or cardboard boxes close by when the delivery is due so they can easily bring goods into the house. Recommend that recipients wash their hands after taking the delivery into their home.

The use of masks should be prioritised for where close contact is unavoidable e.g. where the food recipient is unable to pick up the food from the doorstep. In any case social distancing and handwashing/sanitising rules still apply. Masks should be worn in line with the manufacturer's recommendations, which for paper masks is no more than 15 minutes of effective use.

Drivers should wash hands before and after each delivery. When out making deliveries alcohol hand sanitiser should be used. Hand sanitiser needs to have an alcohol content of at least 60% according to Public Health England. Homemade hand sanitiser may not be effective at killing the virus, and can damage the skin.

## **Organising a hub for food collection:**

There are increased risks with people coming into the venue and not remaining 2 metres apart when waiting. It is therefore recommended to mark the 2 metre distance on the floor (e.g. with coloured tape) in front of the table/counter.

### **Volunteers**

Minimise the number of people working in the venue at a time to ensure that each volunteer can work 2 metre apart.

### **Cleaning**

Tables and other equipment used should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. Household or commercial brands of detergent and sanitising products are suitable for this purpose.

Single use paper cloths should be used for cleaning and sanitizing.

Cleaning equipment should itself be cleaned with detergent and sanitising products after each use e.g. buckets, bowls, mops, etc.

Hand contact surfaces such as door handles, taps, switches, hand rails, etc. should be cleaned and disinfected before and after the venue is used, again household or commercial cleaning products are suitable.

### **Recipients**

Maintain a 2 metre distance between people waiting in the queue and also between them and the volunteers distributing food.

Let people enter the venue only in small groups, to ensure that spaces are not crowded. Queue control to maintain social distancing will be required outside of the venue if it becomes very busy.

## **Useful further information:**

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

<http://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-safety-for-community-cooking-and-food-banks>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-support-advice/guidance-for-businesses-that-want-to-offer-takeaways-and-deliveries>

## **For specific food safety advice:**

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