

Key facts:

- WHO (World Health Organisation) advises the public to wash their hands after handling money, especially if handling or eating food. But they haven't issued a warning about using banknotes.
- Saying this, cash is often not a preferred means of payment, and presents a number of issues.
- Certain shops and supermarkets have started to limit acceptance of cash for transactions and many people don't have access to cash while self-isolating at home.
- Despite this, the use of cash may be unavoidable in the present period.

What can you do?

- There is growing resource of local shops and other businesses able to deliver groceries, essentials and meals. As well as taxi companies being able to purchase and deliver shopping from supermarkets and local shops. All those can take payments by card over the phone. Signposting people to this and/or helping them to shop through this route can be very helpful thing you can do.
- If you are a volunteer organiser, the most important thing you can do is to follow simple, practical precautions such as keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts to safeguard all involved.
- As an organisation or volunteer organiser you should ensure there is a central record of any concerns raised in respect of payments, and make people aware of how they can raise a concern.
- We recommend that, as much as possible, volunteers and staff do shopping and come back with a receipt before asking for money from people in self-isolation.
- The original receipt should be given to the requestor and volunteer should take a photo of the receipt for their own records in case of any future discrepancy.
- Many places recommend, if possible, that volunteers do not make purchases larger than £30 for any one person or family in self-isolation.

Important DON'Ts

- Volunteers should not be permitted to withdraw cash on behalf of a client.
- It is not appropriate for volunteers to accept credit/debit cards from people asking for help in order to buy resources on their behalf as this is a safeguarding risk.

Ideas on money handling for volunteer organisers providing shopping:

Option A

- A volunteer may be willing to make purchases on behalf of a client and settle up in cash afterwards.

- Alternatively, a client may provide a volunteer with some cash to make purchases and receive change and a receipt subsequently.
- Money should be enclosed in an envelope and left at the doorstep once the volunteer has made contact face-to-face (at a safe distance)
- It is understood that even if this system is available initially, the inability of people to go outdoors and obtain cash will limit this type of transaction in future.

Option B

- A volunteer contacts the client and is given a list of purchases to make
- The volunteer goes to the shop or supermarket, makes themselves known to a manager/ key point, informs them what they are doing, and goes out to collect goods from the store
- The volunteer then returns to the shop operative, a tally is drawn up, and payment is taken from the client over the telephone using a debit or credit card.

Option C

- A volunteer contacts the client and is given a list of purchases to make
- The volunteer goes to the shop or supermarket, collects the goods and pays for the transaction using a credit or debit card
- The volunteer delivers the goods to the client together with their bank or PayPal details
- The client then reimburses the volunteer for the transaction amount online
- Once the payment has been received the help request can be notified as completed by the volunteer

Other local solutions:

- Some local organisations set up a kitty and, where the client or the volunteer can't pay directly by card, the volunteers can take the money from the kitty and then the client pays the kitty back.
- Some befriending services are using apps/ online services like Sum Up, which mean people can pay them with card over phone or via a reader volunteer carry. Please note there are costs involved for purchasing card readers and transaction fees. It also requires a bit of organising.
- In some locations in Sussex, especially in more rural areas, one local business is acting as central phone number for meals, grocery and pharmacy shopping which they then liaise on with other business. They can take card payment over phone & arrange delivery.
- New - Asda has just launched Volunteer Shopping Card. This can work well for residents who are digitally skilled, as they'd need to order the card on-line. But it helps with cashless transactions between volunteers and residents.

This briefing was written using information from the government and national and local charities, in partnership with the local organisations listed below. Thank you to those and other local groups for sharing their tips and best practice.



