

How to carry out Personal Shopping Requests

Guidance

The Personal Shopping team provide support for residents living in Watford and Three Rivers who have been advised to self-isolate. They may be self-isolating because:

- they have received a 'shielding' letter from the NHS telling them to self-isolate for 12 weeks, due to an existing underlying condition.
- they need to self-isolate whether due to age, due to being pregnant, because of a disability or other health condition.
- they are self-isolating because they are caring for a vulnerable person, or because a member of the household has potential symptoms of Covid-19.

The role will include carrying out a weekly shop for those unable to do it themselves.

You can volunteer to complete requests as often as you like. You only need to respond to requests that you want to carry out. You are not expected or required to say yes to every request – we recognise that you will have work/personal commitments that will mean that you are not always available.

An important element of the role is to ensure that you adhere to social distancing guidelines at all times. Our team can provide advice on this but please read the latest guidelines which you will find on our website <https://www.mywellbeing.community/> or by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/>

Process for allocating referrals to volunteers

All of our personal shopper volunteers will be required to join our dedicated WhatsApp group because that is how we identify who we will allocate the request to. By offering each request to the whole group, we are able to quickly identify who is available to help and ensure that the request is completed as quickly as possible. The process works as follows:

1. We receive a request for help.
2. One of our team phones the individual to ensure that we fully understand their needs.
3. The details of the request is then shared via our WhatsApp group so that all of our volunteers can see it. We share the first half of the postcode and brief description of the request so that you know what the request is and what area it is located in eg Weekly shop – WD17
4. You can then decide if you are willing and able to carry out the request. If you are available, then please reply to the WhatsApp message. If you are not available, then you simply do not respond to the message.
5. Our team will review the responses we receive and then decide which volunteer we will be asked to complete the request. The task is then allocated based on factors such as who is able to respond soonest and who lives nearest.
6. We then allocate the request to the chosen volunteer via the Volunteering App that we asked you to download to your phone and you will receive the full details relating to the request. Information is not shared via the group communication (WhatsApp) as that would break privacy and confidentiality guidelines.
7. Please read the request and make sure that you understand it. If you have any queries, then please contact the team on 01923 216962, or alternatively privately contact one of the coordinators within the WhatsApp group.

8. If completing a regular weekly shop then you will be asked to contact the individual to get their shopping list (likely to change slightly every week) ahead of each shop you carry out for them.
 - a. Please remind the individual to keep a note of items then need as they think of them throughout the week so that they have a list ready for you when you call
 - b. Ask for additional information when taking the list from them so that you understand their requirement. For example, if they ask for milk then how many pints do they require and do they want whole/semi-skimmed/skimmed/almond milk? If they want bananas then how many do they want?
 - c. If you do not understand an item description then always ask for clarification
 - d. Do not judge them for the items that they have chosen and if they ask for items that you are uncomfortable purchasing then please notify our team so that we can re-allocate the shop. If you have a copy of the shopping list then please send to us via email so we can pass it on to the next volunteer and do not need to call the individual to request the list again

Framework for carrying out personal shops

- Please read any requests that you receive carefully so that you understand what you are being asked to do. Always check address information so that you are certain that you are delivering shopping to the right person.
- Always adhere to social distancing guidelines and stay 2 meters / 6 foot away from anyone else (see above).
- Shopping can be carried out at any of the major supermarkets; Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons. Please shop at the one most convenient for yourself.
- A letter of authority will be issued to you for each of the major supermarkets which will allow you to carry out multiple shops at once or buy bulk items.
- **The maximum amount that you are authorised to spend on a personal shop is £50** and that is the maximum amount that we will authorise with regards to the payment of your expenses. If you spend over £50 then please note that we retain the right to decline payment of the amount exceeding the £50 authorisation.
- Whilst shopping please make note of the following:
 - You will be given a shopping list to be completed in the app
 - If an item is not available, where possible, the item can be substituted for a suitable alternative
 - If people do not want unavailable items to be substituted there will be a note in the app to advise as such
 - Please take due care to ensure damaged packages are not purchased
 - Loyalty programme points cannot be claimed
 - Purchase new carrier bags for each shop and do not use bags provided by residents – the person receiving the shop will be charge for the bag. Please note that we cannot reuse any bags purchased due to contamination risk so do not purchase expensive long lasting bags as we cannot re-use them for the next shop and many of the people we are supporting may be experiencing financial difficulties
 - If the person has mobility issues and may struggle to lift bags we will mark on the system that they require lighter packing so please purchase additional bags to ensure that they are packed lightly
- Please carry out the request as soon possible and then update the Volunteering App to show that you have completed it.

- Upload a photo of the receipt to the app so expenses can be reimbursed to you. Payment will be made within 24 hours once a copy of the receipt is received. You will also be paid expenses per shopping list completed to cover any travel costs.

Shopping Delivery process

- When making a shopping delivery, please leave the items on the doorstep, knock on the door and stand at a safe distance away while you wait for the person to answer the door.
- Please try and check the name of the person just to double check that you have the right address.
- Please understand that a lot of the individuals we help are older people or they may have health or mobility issues etc which means they may be slow in getting to the door. Please allow a generous amount of time to get to the door.
- When the person opens the door then please say hello and let them know that you have dropped off their shopping. If they ask who you are then please introduce yourself and let them know that you are volunteering for Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT). W3RT is a registered charity working with the NHS and local government to support people through the current government restrictions.
- If the person does not answer the door then please give them a phone call as they may be in their garden, or hard of hearing etc. If you still get no answer then please wait a few minutes and try the door
- and call them on the phone again. If you still cannot establish contact then please phone our team on 01923 216962 or message our co-ordinator via the WhatsApp group so that we can investigate and provide you with advice.
- Please understand that the person you are helping may not have seen another person in a number of weeks. Please be understanding of this and realise that they may want to engage in conversation with you. We would encourage you to spare a few minutes to have a friendly conversation – this will be appreciated and you will make their day. Please ensure you adhere to social distancing guidelines though.
- If the individual offers to pay you for your time, or offers you a gift, please thank them and politely decline. Accepting a payment/gift is a breach of the volunteer role. If we are advised that this might have happened, then we will need to investigate and appropriate action will be taken.
- Please do not store or share any sensitive information - even with your close family or friends. The people we are helping should be treated with respect and their support needs should remain confidential.

People requiring Further Support

- If you do have a conversation and they tell you that they have some further support needs then please explain that you will inform us, and that we will be in contact with them. Please make sure that you record it in the Volunteering App.
- If you think there is a medical or life-threatening emergency, always call 999.
- Never agree to carry out additional tasks – all requests must go through our team for your own safety and security. However, if you are happy to carry out the request for them then you can record this in the App and we will try to allocate this to you if appropriate.
- Please note that volunteers are not permitted to enter a person's home under any circumstances.
- Please note that you may find it hard to communicate with some individuals – they may have hearing issues or perhaps English is not their first language. Always record this in your notes so that we can make sure that they receive the right support from us.
- You can use the Referral Requested feature to request a referral for: an urgent food parcel, an urgent prescription delivery, a regular food delivery, a regular prescription delivery, a concern you have about a

person's physical or mental wellbeing, about poverty, about their living environment, or about safeguarding. When you save and close the record, W3RT staff will be able to see your notes and will follow up any referral requests.

- If you are unsure about a what to do with a request that you have received, then please let our team know. They will be available to answer your queries Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm and on weekends and bank holidays from 10am to 4pm. You can reach the team by email at volunteering@w3rt.org or by phone on 01923 216962.

Things to consider

- Be warm and welcoming - remember that your tone of voice and body language can express your feelings, even if you don't mean to.
- Value and respect what the individual has told you even if you do not agree.
- Be genuinely interested in what they are saying and be sincere in the way you communicate with them.
- Empathise – try and understand their feelings and what it is like for them to be experiencing this situation.
- Often the individual may be very open with you about their health issues and other difficulties that they are experiencing, such as the loss of a loved one. It is ok to acknowledge and respond to this. You might say something like, 'I'm sorry to hear that, how sad' or 'I'm sorry to hear that, that must be very difficult'.
- If you have been upset by something that has happened or that someone has shared with you then please let us know so that we can support you.
- Always allow enough time to complete the shopping/delivery so that you are not rushed and that you can update your notes in the App.
- If you are using your car to carry out shopping then please ensure that you adhere to speed restrictions and parking restrictions. We regret that we cannot cover the cost of fines.

Your welfare

Please keep us updated if your circumstances change so that we can update our records. If you are unwell or your caring responsibilities mean that you need to take a break from volunteering, please let us know. When notifying us of changes such as this we will offer to provide you with a wellbeing call to make sure that you are ok and help identify any support that you might need – we are here to help.