



Questions to help groups assess continued support needs of residents

As the lockdown starts to lift, many Community Groups are revisiting the needs of the people they are providing ongoing support to. You want to ensure your volunteers continue to support those most in need, and to reduce the risk of people becoming dependent on support services. This will become more important as volunteers start to return to work.

Many who have been self-isolating might feel anxious, so gently encouraging people to support themselves will empower them and support their confidence.

Keep an eye on the evolving [Government Advice](#). For example, although those shielding at present (3rd June) may meet another household outdoors whilst maintaining social distancing, it is still not advised that they go into closed spaces such as shops/pharmacies.

One way of doing this could be to phone up the people you are supporting. Here are some suggestions for what you could say.

As the government has changed the rules on going out, we are checking with the people to see if they still need support.

(or)

Our volunteers have been doing a fabulous job, but some of them are going back to work now, so we are checking with the people to see if they still need support.

- Are you still self isolating? Can I ask why? How do you feel about going back to normal life and moving away from self isolating/shielding ? [This could be, for example, because of shielding \(government letter\), aged over 70, other medical conditions, exposure to covid19, told to self isolate by track and trace. Check the current government advice for those groups. At time of writing \(3rd June\), those who are shielded, or who are self-isolating due to potential covid exposure must not go into closed spaces such as shops/pharmacies.](#)
- How much do you currently get out? What do you like to do when you get out? [This will help you to assess their support needs based on their behaviour. If they have been to the beach or a family BBQ, then you can ask them if they are ready to start getting their own shopping/prescriptions etc.](#)

[If they take a short walk for their wellbeing each day, they may still need support with shopping as they should not be entering shops if they are vulnerable \(see current government advice\).](#)

[If someone has not been out since March this might indicate they will need support and encouragement. You could ask how they feel about going out.](#)



- What steps are you taking to going back to doing things before Covid-19? How do you feel about that?

People may have become dependent on support, e.g. due to a change in financial circumstances, a loss of confidence, avoiding public transport or anxiety after not going out for weeks. Encourage and support them to become more independent. They may need to try different ways of shopping - eg online deliveries or click and collect with a volunteer collecting. Many of the pharmacies will now arrange deliveries if people are vulnerable. Do local shops deliver? They may need their hand holding a bit.

- What kind of support do you have around you? Do any of your family live nearby? Do you have any local friends who are still going out? Is there anyone else who could help you? What is stopping you asking them? You may find that they have local friends or family who could help. It may be worth exploring why they are not asking them - it could be pride or independence, or there could be safeguarding risks. If it is the former, they may need supporting/cajoling to ask their family.

- What else is worrying you? How do you feel about the future and moving back to normality?

Using the useful contacts spreadsheet, can you signpost the client? They may require Citizens Advice for financial help, or support to deal with anxiety or bereavement. Setting up a follow-up telephone call could reassure them that support is still available, even when they do start to do their own shopping again.

If you are satisfied that the person has alternative ways of getting support (eg doing their own shopping, friends and family, online shopping), you may need to tell them that you have fewer volunteers now/you will be winding down in the coming months (whatever is the truth) and that you are going to have to reduce the service for them.