

Making deliveries to disabled customers

Although all but essential shops and retail outlets have to remain closed at the moment, customers are still able to shop online for goods that are delivered to their homes. The advice is that – if possible – no one should go out to shop apart from for essential items, and so even the shops that do remain open are seeing an increased demand for deliveries.

The Government has provided advice to shops on how to maintain social distancing within premises and when making deliveries in order to protect the health of employees and the public from the coronavirus.

The guidance below is to help you to serve and meet the needs of disabled customers to ensure that they are still able to obtain essential products, services and medicines and that you do not inadvertently discriminate against them while trying to follow Government guidance.

It is important to note that not all disabled people are more susceptible to the coronavirus and so many will still be able to shop in person rather than having to rely on online and delivery services.

Taking orders

Remember that the person placing the order whether online or by telephone might not be the person receiving the delivery. Many family members and friends are placing orders for older and disabled people who might live at some distance from them because:

- the disabled person is self-isolating or is in a particularly vulnerable group and cannot go out to the shops themselves
- websites are inaccessible and so customers with disabilities such as dyslexia or a visual impairment cannot browse and check out using assistive technology such as screen readers

- the person who needs the items isn't able to use a computer or does not have internet access, or they have difficulty remembering a list of items to order over the phone
- telephone wait times are too long, and the person is unable to stay on hold or they have manual dexterity or memory problems which makes it difficult to use a telephone and call routing systems and computers.

Tip: When asking for details about who is making the order ask if the person receiving the delivery is different to the person making the order. If you are prioritising disabled, older or vulnerable customers, allow details of the person who is receiving the delivery (e.g. age or disability) to be entered as well as contact details (such as a phone number) of the person placing the order so they will be alerted if there is a problem.

Making deliveries

Government guidance is that restaurants and retailers running delivery services should not physically hand goods or food to customers, but should ring doorbells and stand two metres away until the items have been collected by the customer. A few things to remember when making deliveries to disabled customers:

- Some disabled customers might find it difficult to bend down and pick up items from the floor. Drivers might need to leave items on a table that has been placed outside the flat or house or in a porch instead.
- Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing might not hear a doorbell, so will need to be alerted in some other way – such as by text – that their delivery has arrived.
- Customers with mobility impairments might take longer to answer the door. Drivers will need to knock or ring a doorbell and wait a little longer for the door to be answered, rather than assuming that there is no one home.

Tip: When taking online orders have a space for the person making the order to enter delivery details like the above and when taking orders by telephone ask all customers if they have any delivery requirements. You could ask something like “is there anything the driver should know when delivering – e.g. that there might be a delay in answering the door or to text as doorbell / knocking will not be heard?” This could be alongside a box asking if the customer is self-isolating or unwell to alert the driver to take additional precautions.



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