



## Important Information

### All food box deliveries are ending on 31 July

The Department for Communities, your local council, health trusts and local voluntary and community organisations have been supporting communities during the COVID-19 pandemic – this has included delivering boxes of essential food as part of an emergency programme.

You have been receiving this food box because you (or someone who looks out for you) told us that you were asked to shield by your GP and stay at home; and that you had no other available help or alternative way to get food.

You will have received a letter in your food box at the end of June advising you that the **food box service for anyone shielding will end on 31 July**.

The Department of Health announced that the shielding period will be paused from 31 July. Whilst the shielding period has been paused, the Department of Health has advised that wherever possible, you should avoid enclosed spaces where social distancing is hard to maintain – such as public transport and shops.

## Changes to food box deliveries

We understand that it may not always be possible for you to avoid shops and would advise you to take one of the following steps where possible:

- Secure a weekly online delivery slot from one of the large supermarkets. There is a system in place for anyone shielding to register for priority online delivery up until 31 July – we've provided more details on this below. Even if you don't register for the priority delivery set up for the shielded group, you can still go directly to the supermarkets to secure an online slot – this will be subject to availability.
- Ask a family member, friend or neighbour to help you to get the food and household items you need
- Arrange delivery from a local store

We understand that the transition away from having a weekly food box delivered may be difficult and that you may still need help to access food after 31 July. If you still need help please contact the COVID 19 Community Helpline where an advisor will match you with other local help and support that meets your needs going forward.

COVID 19 Community Helpline **0808 802 0020**, text **ACTION** to **81025**, or email **covid19@adviceni.net** or visit **www.adviceni.net/coronavirus**.

Thank you for staying home, staying safe, and helping to protect the NHS.

## For Information: Other ways to access food

### Priority online supermarket deliveries for those shielding:



If you have already registered for the priority online shopping from Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, or Iceland you will be able to continue using this service after 31 July.



You can visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/register-priority-online-food-delivery](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/register-priority-online-food-delivery) to register your interest however we will no longer be taking new registrations for this service after 31 July.

## Other ways to access food



### Local Convenience Store Home Delivery

Retailers including Spar/Eurospar/Vivo, SuperValu/Centra/Mace are participating.

- Phone your local convenience store and ask for their delivery service
- The store staff will do your shop with you over the phone
- Many let you pay by card over the phone for your shopping and for the cost of a taxi to deliver it to your home. Some may do this free of charge
- Your items will be delivered to you by taxi as soon as possible



### Other independent retailers

- [whoisdeliveringni](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WholsDeliveringNI) is a Facebook group (run by members of the community) which allows users to share information on businesses in Northern Ireland delivering fresh food, groceries and pre-made meals [www.facebook.com/groups/WholsDeliveringNI](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WholsDeliveringNI). This is an unofficial community group so content accuracy and reliability cannot always be guaranteed.

## OTHER HELP



### Make the Call

If you are having financial difficulties or you are just not sure what benefits you might be entitled to, please contact our Make the Call Team. Our friendly staff will carry out a quick and easy check to ensure you and the people in your household are getting all of the benefits, supports and services you may be entitled to. We can also help you complete application forms. You can call us on **0800 232 1271**, or text **ADVICE** to **67300** or email us [makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk).



### The Independent Advice Network

There is also an extensive Independent Advice Network that you can contact directly for local help and support. Contact details for these organisations have been supplied in your food box alongside this letter.



### Mental health and wellbeing

The Minding Your Head website [www.mindingyourhead.info/](http://www.mindingyourhead.info/) contains information to help you look after your own mental health and to support others. If you are concerned about your mental health you can talk to your GP, or you can call Lifeline on **0808 808 8000** where you can speak to a trained counsellor.