



26 March 2020

Open letter to supermarkets

Access to food and groceries

We are delighted by the national effort made by supermarkets across the country to enable key workers to have priority access to food and groceries.

The coronavirus pandemic is the most serious public health emergency that our country is facing. The government's action plan to protect the NHS from being overwhelmed, and to protect the lives of those who are most vulnerable, will only be achieved if the health and social care sector work side-by-side.

The recent government announcement identifying those who are considered keyworkers included 'careworkers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain'.

Though a broad definition of keyworkers in the health and social care sector, the diverse nature of the sector does not easily lend itself to the use of a uniform ID card in the same manner as the NHS, making the task of identifying key workers that much more difficult. We therefore ask, whilst there is no official means to prove their identity at the moment, that social careworkers producing a letter from their employer or the Local Authority or legitimate evidence be sufficient to confirm their status.

With the current situation of stockpiling in supermarkets across the country, access to food and groceries is itself proving to be a major challenge and cause for concern for many who work in the social care sector. This includes staff at residential settings like care homes and staff who provide support to people in their own homes in the community.

As people whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response, we ask that careworkers and staff within the social care sector be treated with the same level of recognition as NHS staff in gaining priority access to food and groceries at your supermarkets.

Help us to help those who are supporting and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Yours faithfully,

Lisa Lenton
Chair, Care Provider Alliance

Rt. Hon. Paul Burstow
Chair, Social Care Institute for Excellence