



# Accessing cash safely – advice for older people during Covid 19

One of the many concerns currently facing older people is being able to access cash and pay for everyday goods and services while they follow government advice and stay at home.

We're communicating with hundreds of older people every day through our check-in-and-chat service for the isolated over 70s as well as our usual Advice services, has issued a brief statement to support older people.

Age Cymru's chief executive, Victoria Lloyd explains: "Many older people have become used to accessing their pension or benefits from their local post office or high street bank, enabling them to draw down cash to pay for many everyday items such as food and clothes, in addition to services like window cleaning and gardening.

"However, in line with current government advice, older people are currently staying home to help keep themselves safe. This means that they may have to consider adopting other ways to access their cash or to pay for goods and services. And in doing

so they must also make sure that, as far as possible, they protect themselves from criminals trying to take advantage of older people isolating themselves.

"Most major post offices and banks are still open for business, so it might be a good idea to give them a call first to discuss which available methods of accessing cash best suit your needs."

The following briefing note provides guidance on the different ways you can access cash safely to pay for goods and services.

## Post Offices

If you hold Post Office Card Account, you may nominate a trusted individual to become your Permanent Agent and withdraw cash on your behalf using a second card with its own PIN number.

**The Payout Now** service enables a bank to send you a voucher by email, text or post, which you can then share with a trusted individual to withdraw cash on your behalf.

**The Fast PACE** service allows an account holder to nominate someone to cash one of their cheques on their behalf. The person going to cash the cheque will also need to show their ID when they arrive at the Post Office.

## Banks

You can ask your bank if you can set up a **third-party mandate**. This allows you to nominate a trusted person to access your account, though you may be able to limit what the third party can do, for example, only having the ability to access information, withdraw restricted funds, or check balances.

**Money Transfers** are an easy way to transfer money from your account to another person's account, such as your volunteer shopper. You may arrange the transfer either by telephone or via online banking. You'll need the recipient's name, the name of their bank, their six-digit sort code and eight-digit account number and the exact amount to be transferred.

**Bank cheques** can be used to pay for small services such as gardening but may not be convenient to reimburse volunteer shoppers as they could take several days to clear and thereby leave them out of pocket.

## Other methods of paying for goods and services

**Pre-paid cards** work in a similar way to mobile telephone top-up cards whereby the card can be topped up at Post Offices, shops displaying the PayPoint sign, or sometimes over the telephone or online. Some pre-paid cards let you ask for a second card to give to a friend, family member or someone else you trust. This card will have its own unique PIN number so that someone helping you with shopping can pay for your goods without having any effect on their own finances. However, there are a number of

drawbacks, as pre-paid cards can incur charges such as transaction fees or monthly management fees.

**Store gift vouchers** can often be ordered from most major retailers over the telephone, or online. You may pass them on to friends, family or a trusted volunteer shopper. However, some retailers may not allow you to spend small balances that remain on the gift voucher so you may have to spend the full amount in one go.

## Make yourself more resilient to financial scams

Never hand over your cash, cards or bank details, particularly to someone you don't know. There are many safer ways to pay for your goods.

Be wary of strangers asking for money before getting your shopping. Instead, stick to people you know, or recognisable charities where you can check to see if they are operating voluntary shopping services in your area.

Before making a payment for goods check that the amount you're being charged tallies with the receipt. You can ask the volunteer to leave the receipt in the shopping bag.

To help keep you safe, ask the shopper to leave the goods at the doorstep and move at least two metres away before you open the door. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling the shopping.

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For more information about the best ways to access cash safely visit: [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice)

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