# The MK Good Neighbour Guide

Ways to help your community amidst
the COVID-19 pandemic



mkcommunity
foundation
connecting and growing our community

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milton keynes council

As the impact of coronavirus/COVID-19 on our community grows and the government asks more people to self-isolate, many different groups of all ages are at increased risk of isolation and loneliness in our communities, especially the elderly and most vulnerable in our society.

Times like these emphasise the need for us to reach out to those in our communities who may need the extra help during these worrying times.

As Milton Keynes residents, we pride ourselves on supporting our community where and when we can.
At this unprecedented time, we believe it's vital to pull together to help those affected by the situation caused by COVID-19.

There are things you can do to help.  These include very local offers of support and help to your neighbours or volunteering through a coordinated programme to reach vulnerable people. The most important consideration is that people are safe and feel positive about any interactions.

There are a number of things we can do to help those that need it the most.

# Some examples of how you can help your neighbours and community

## 1. Offer help and support

It's simple things that can make a big difference to someone vulnerable or in need. If you're fit and healthy you can lend your support to those neighbours who will need your help the most. Why not pop a postcard through your neighbours' doors with your contact details and information on what you can help them out with?

Sometimes even sharing the school run with a frail parent or taking an elderly neighbour's dog out for a walk when they are no longer able to due to self-isolation can go far in making their lives easier.
You could volunteer with an existing organisation.

**Community Action: MK** are coordinating volunteers to support people in need through existing groups and organisations. This gives the added assurance that volunteers are registered and their details are recorded. They are developing a range of roles and are identifying which of those roles need DBS checks and those which don't.  You may volunteer with an organisation already, but your role is currently impossible to do; if so, they can help.

## 2. Reach out on social platforms

Facebook community pages and platforms like Nextdoor can be helpful ways to keep connected to people.

However, please be careful about sharing too much personal information and never hand money or financial details over to someone you don't know or trust.

## 3. Stay connected

Self-isolation can be lonely. As self-isolation increases and government measures heighten, we will need to find new ways to stay connected and check on one another for our physical and mental wellbeing. A friendly phone call or a quick chat to check up on your neighbours who feel alone and isolated at this difficult time. You can even video call them to make the call feel more life-like.

There may be some more creative ways to stay connected. You could organise an indoor picnic for your neighbours where you all connect via Skype and eat your lunch together.  You could organise a street band to play music which you can listen to in your houses.  More ideas are available [here.](#)

## 4. Share accurate information

Support those in your community who may be anxious about COVID-19. Direct them the official websites such as the [NHS England](#) website and correct advice from [Public Health England](#). Please refrain from spreading inaccurate or sensationalised news from other sources. For general wellbeing tips, you can also visit the [Milton Keynes Council website](#).

## 5. Continue practising good hygiene

A simple and effective way to protect yourself and others is by making sure you wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or a hand sanitiser if you are out and about. It's particularly important to wash your hands once you get home or arrive at work or before you prepare or eat food.

### 5. Be kind

Remember the saying "tough times do not last, but tough people do"? The kinder we are to each other, the more resilient we will be against COVID-19. We will all be impacted at some point, many with changes to our lifestyle from self-isolation to remote working.

Help others when you can, avoid panic buying or scaremongering and be kind. You can find more useful tips on how you can help out in your community [here](#).

## And some things not to do

### ✖ Don't stockpile

Supermarkets have already reassured the public they will continue getting daily stocks and are doing their best to stock up the shelves daily. Some have put in place limits for essential grocery purchases so that everyone especially vulnerable people can get what they need. There is no reason to stockpile.

### ✖ Don't travel if not essential

Some of us are not able to work from home at this time, and we still have to go out for essential food items. Limit your travel where you can.

### ✖ Don't cause undue panic

While it is great to stay connected, please don't share sensationalist information or pictures. These may not impact on you, but you could adversely affect someone who's more fragile.

**✘ Don't let go of good habits and routines**

It's easy for any of us to shut down or go into panic mode. If you are self-isolating, try to keep to a daily schedule as best as you can, even if you're not working. Read, do household chores, get on with outstanding DIY jobs. When possible, try to get some exercise – even if it is just walking around in your garden.

**✘ Don't get locked into bad news**

Stay informed on the latest developments and know what's going on but don't get locked into a cycle of 24-hours news broadcast. This will only cause needless anxiety. Turn to news at intervals throughout the day so you can stay up to date without being overwhelmed. Also, try to schedule in at least 30 minutes of quiet time in your day.

**✘ Don't give cash or share your bank account, debit or credit card details**

Sadly, it's at such volatile times opportunists find ways to prey on vulnerable people. Practise due diligence and make sure you don't share financial details or hand out cash to anyone you don't trust.

**✘ Don't share personal details with anyone who's not from an official organisation**

Much like with your financial information, practice caution if anyone who isn't from an official organisation asks for your personal details.

## ✖ Don't make yourself vulnerable

If you're fit and healthy and want to help out with community efforts by reaching out those who are more vulnerable, make sure you always do so without putting yourself in danger. When giving help at someone else's home, always stay on the doorstep and ensure you are not alone with a vulnerable person at any time.

## ✖ Don't feel obliged to accept every offer of help

If you feel overwhelmed or simply feel you can't accept an offer of help for any reason, don't feel obliged. As long you do so politely, the person offering won't be offended.