

COVID-19 - recommendations for community action by dietitians to support care agencies working in older people's own homes

[Guidance for supported living](#) and [guidance for home care](#) recognises that people who fall into this group will continue to need regular care and support and social distancing may not be possible. It also makes recommendations in the event of an outbreak. Community services are expected to work collaboratively with other support services including care agencies in their local area. We ask dietitians to consider implementing the following actions to support non-NHS services to care for our high-risk population:

1. Determine and agree probable availability of dietetic support and leadership for community teams & care agencies
2. Identify non face-to-face tools which can support care agency staff to continue nutrition & hydration care, support & delivery
3. Contact and collaborate with other community staff & responsible Executive Lead to maintain a connection with care agencies & community staff
4. Encourage continued use of nutritional screening e.g. Nutrition Checklist where possible. During a COVID-19 outbreak this advice may need to change
5. Work with acute staff to ensure nutritional risk scores & nutritional care plans are included on hospital discharge documentation
6. Discuss and agree plans for how nutrition support can be provided for those who have contracted COVID-19
7. Review local supermarket access for vulnerable groups and their carers
8. Support local supermarkets to understand the importance of continuing to stock ingredients commonly used to increase the nutrient density of food & fluid e.g. skimmed milk powder, vitamin fortified milkshake powder, ground nuts, cheese
9. Dietetic assistant practitioners, dietetic students & support workers can provide invaluable support to care agencies and dietitians alike.
10. Oral nutritional supplements (ONS) should only be considered where clinically indicated (in line with local NHS guidance) & where patients meet ACBS indications (ACBS indications do not include food access issues)