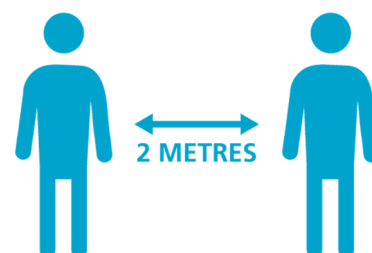


# Going back into the community

Lots of people are excited at the prospect of the lockdown being lifted but that won't be the case for everyone and if you are feeling more anxious than excited, that's absolutely okay. It's important to know that even though lockdown rules are lifting slowly, if it's been a while since you've been out and about; there are a few things that you might need to know.

## When you're out

- People still have to stay 2 meters apart for social distancing
- Some people are not keeping safe distances, but you can take steps to keep yourself safe and avoid contact with them
- Some people may be wearing masks and gloves when they're out and about
- Please don't be offended if someone avoids walking near you or crosses the road from you – they might still be scared about catching the virus.



## When you're shopping

- Most shops and restaurants are closed and those that are open might have slightly different opening hours
- You might have to wait outside the shop in a queue (also standing 2 meters apart) for a little while before you get to go in to the shop
- Some shops have shields up between you and staff working at checkouts to protect them and you
- Some shops have a one way system in place (i.e. supermarkets and garden centres). Staff may also offer to wipe your trolley in some shops too
- The guidance is still to wash your hands regularly. When you're out, you can use hand gel to keep your hands clean but it is important to remember this isn't a replacement for washing your hands.



## Making a plan

Going out for the first time might feel very overwhelming even if you used to feel very confident in the community. To try and help with this, it can help to make a plan before you go so that you feel more prepared.



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## Here are some ideas to write down:

- Where are you going to go?

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- What time are you going? (think about what times of day might be quieter and whether that would be better for you)

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- How are you going to get there? (will you be walking or using public transport, and if it is public transport, make sure you check timetables)

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- What can I do if I feel anxious? (think about breathing exercises, fidgets, listening to music, being on the phone to someone or any other strategies that you know will work for you. Would wearing a mask reduce your anxiety?)

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- Visualise your journey from start to finish and think about any challenges or obstacles that you may encounter. Then have a think about how you would deal with each of these so you have a plan and don't get caught off guard if you come across them when you're out.

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- Make a list before going shopping. This may help you focus on what you need if you feel pressured to move quickly in the shop.

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- Plan something nice that you can do when you get back that will help you feel calm and relaxed.

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## Smaller steps

Starting out in to the community again might be a gradual process so make sure to take your time. If going to the shops is too overwhelming a place to start, then take it in smaller steps.

- Start by walking to the end of your road and get used to seeing other people who are out
- Go a little further on your next journey and gradually start to build it up
- Try going to a local corner shop or a petrol station shop rather than the supermarket and build your way up
- Whatever you do, ensure that you feel in control of the situation and if it becomes overwhelming at any time, then turn back home and try again another day. This is by no means a failed situation but a way to recognise that you may need to gradually return back to visiting local shops and using community services.



Please call **01622 724131** if you would like this leaflet in a different language or format.

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