

Age Scotland demands that older shoppers have a priority hour

Age Scotland urges priority slots for older shoppers at all supermarkets

Scotland's national charity for older people has urged all supermarkets to follow Sainsbury's, Iceland, Tesco and Asda by supporting pensioners and disabled shoppers during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

From Friday 20 March 2020, Asda and Tesco stores across will join Sainsbury's and Iceland to set aside the first hour of opening exclusively for older and more vulnerable shoppers.

This will allow pensioners who might be unwilling or unable to put their health at risk by shopping during busy times to stock on vital food and household supplies.

Sainsbury's is also giving customers aged over 70 priority access to online delivery slots.

Age Scotland welcomes the initiative by the supermarkets who have made changes for pensioners and disabled customers and appreciates the hard work being done by shop staff working tirelessly to keep supermarket supplies available for everyone.

Brian Sloan, chief executive of Age Scotland, said: "Retailers are working flat out to ensure that shops are open and shelves are full. Their staff are doing a laudable job keeping up with the increased demand. But many older people are finding it

hard to get to the shops, when they have been advised to minimise social contact, and equally difficult to get an online delivery when they need it.

“We have received a number of calls from older people worried about getting out to the shops because of the risk of infection, not being able to get the basic food that they need when they do get there, and the non-availability of home delivery slots.

“In one case the son of a 93-year-old woman who lives alone in Fort William was trying to book a Tesco delivery slot for his mother’s weekly shop but couldn’t get an available slot for three weeks, by which time his mother would have run out of essential supplies.

“So while we very much welcome the decision by Sainsbury’s to prioritise both in-shop and online older customers, we would like to see all supermarkets follow their example.

“This is a challenging enough time for older people who are at higher risk of becoming severely unwell if they contract coronavirus, without also having to be afraid of running out of food.

“Surely all the large supermarkets who rely on the loyal custom of older people can ensure they can get vital food deliveries when they need them and set aside at least one hour to allow older shoppers to visit their store safely.

“We look forward to hearing from all the supermarkets on this urgent matter.”

