

**Letter sent to major supermarket chains and UK Government
from UK M.E. charities and the All Party Parliamentary Group on M.E.**

Friday 27 March 2020



We are writing on behalf of the adults, children and young people we support who have Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) (also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or CFS), asking for your help.

The Government has identified that people with chronic neurological conditions, including M.E./CFS, are at increased risk of severe illness from Coronavirus.

More than one in four people with M.E./CFS are so severely affected that they are unable to leave their homes independently, and even those with the milder form of this non-visible illness struggle to access services and support.

Many of those we support have relied on the excellent home delivery service you offer for years, to get food and essential supplies. But over the past few weeks the increased demand has meant they are unable to compete with healthy people who are able to spend longer online, searching for slots and sourcing deliveries.

We are also hearing from those who are able to visit stores who have tried to use the dedicated shopping times for those at risk – but who have been challenged because the debilitating pain, fatigue and cognitive difficulties that come with this non-visible condition cannot be seen.

We are now seeing a huge increase in the number of calls to our already busy helplines, with many telling us they do not have any food in the house.

While those who are house/bed-bound are not necessarily included in the Government's official category of "vulnerable," this does not give the full picture. This group of increasingly desperate people are unable to visit a store and many have no friends or family to support them.

They need urgent help now – please will you:

- include those house/bed-bound by M.E./CFS in your priority access group for your online service?
- allow those with M.E./CFS, who are able to leave the house, access to priority shopping times in store?
We would be happy to provide our members with a resource they can download that shows they have a chronic neurological condition and are eligible to use this service.

Our teams are happy to help answer any questions or provide more information.

Carol Monaghan MP
Chair, APPG for M.E.

The Countess of Mar
Chair of Forward-ME

Ben Lake MP

Jim Shannon MP

Mark Tami MP

Dr James Davies MP

Edward Davey MP

Alex Sobel MP

Dame Diana Johnson MP

Sonya Chowdhury
Chief Executive
Action for M.E.

Nigel Riley
Chair
ME Association

Sue Waddle
ME Research UK

Esperanza Moreno
#MEAction UK

Helen Winning
Chief Executive
The ME Trust

Simon Lawrence
Chair, The 25% ME Group

Jane Colby
Executive Director
Tymes Trust

Janice Kent
Director, reMEMber

Dr Nina Muirhead
Chair, Medical Education Group
UK CFS/ME Research Collaborative

Dr William Weir

Dr Nigel Speight