**Email to disability groups on the card**

**Subject:** Face covering exemption card for public transport

**Text:**

Dear [name],

From Monday 15 June, the government made it compulsory for passengers on public transport – buses, trams and trains – to wear a face covering.

While we expect everyone to wear a face covering if they can, we want to reassure you that anyone who has a justifiable reason on the grounds of health or disability will be free to travel without wearing one.

**Journey Assistance Card (Exemptions Card)**

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has produced a flash card for those exempt from wearing face coverings (*full list below*). The card will be available on request from our Customer Services team, which can be contacted in the following ways:

* Phone: 0161 244 1000 (Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm, weekends 8am to 8pm)
* Web: [TfGM website contact form](https://tfgm.com/contact-form)

Once you’ve contacted the customer team, your card will be emailed to you as a file which can be printed off or shown as a flash pass on your phone.

The cards will also be available in our Travelshops across Greater Manchester.

TfGM’s cards are valid across all transport modes and operators in Greater Manchester. They are discreet, easy to use and understand and can provide reassurance, especially if a person’s disability is hidden. You simply show the card on request to any member of staff who may ask why you are not wearing a face covering.

If you already carry a Journey Assistance card from another operator, you can continue to use this, or you can request TFGM’s card also, it is up to you. The card is not mandatory and it’s also fine if you chose not to use this card, simply to explain that you are unable to wear a face covering.

I also wanted to reassure you that operators for bus, train and tram services have informed their staff to provide advice and support to passengers on protecting themselves and others while travelling, particularly those with additional needs.

While staff may ask a passenger not wearing a face covering if they are aware that it is compulsory to wear one when using public transport, they have been advised to accept any valid reason a passenger may give for not wearing one and not to ask for further details.

We are also encouraging all passengers to be respectful and to look after each other, through passenger information, and not to challenge passengers who aren’t wearing a face covering, as they may have a hidden disability or another valid reason not to do so.

Our guidance remains that people should stay at home as much as possible and only travel if necessary. And anyone who needs to travel should only use public transport if they have no other choice.

**Exemptions to wearing a face covering**

Government guidance published on Monday 15 June 2020 sets out that the requirement to wear a face covering does not apply to:

* Children under the age of 11.
* Transport operator employees, when they are acting in the course of their employment.
* Police officers or emergency responders such as paramedics or fire officers acting in the course of their duty.

The requirement to wear a face covering also does not apply to passengers who have a **legitimate reason not to wear one**. Legitimate reasons include:

* If you have a physical or mental illness or impairment, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering.
* If putting on, wearing or removing a face covering would cause you severe distress.
* If you are travelling with, or helping, someone who relies on lip reading or BSL to communicate.
* If you are travelling to avoid injury or escape the risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you.
* If you need to remove it during your journey to avoid harm or injury or the risk of harm or injury to yourself or others.
* If you need to eat, drink, or take medication you can remove your face covering.
* If you are asked to remove your face covering by a police officer or other official, for example to check your railcard.

The government’s full list of exemptions, also covering travel modes such as ferries, is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings>.

**Further information**

Anyone who would like safe travel advice and support can speak to TfGM staff at bus stations and interchanges, including at our Travelshops. Alternatively, they can contact our Customer Services team:

Phone: 0161 244 1000 (Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm, weekends 8am to 8pm)
Twitter: [@OfficialTfGM](https://twitter.com/OfficialTfGM)
Web: [TfGM website contact form](https://tfgm.com/contact-form)
Post: Transport for Greater Manchester, 2 Piccadilly Place, Manchester, M1 3BG

Please share this information with your members, contacts, clients and partners.

Stay safe,

Stephen Rhodes

Customer Director

Transport for Greater Manchester