

TAS is currently supporting the CT sector at a time when unprecedented demands are being placed upon it. Our initial information sheet was circulated on 6 April – this newsletter provides updates. For previous information, newsletters, and further debate on the current crisis, please see TAS website: <https://taspartnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

### Face Coverings Compulsory on Public Transport in England – Further Comment

As noted in the last issue, from 15 June all passengers in England must wear a face covering – defined as any kind of gauze or fabric membrane which is in place over the nose and mouth and through which the wearer breathes. This can be a scarf or bandana and need not meet any specification – it is not intended to suggest that medical-grade face masks should be worn. There are two separate directives in play here. Firstly, the Govt. website says it will be the operator’s responsibility: “government asks transport operators in England to make wearing face coverings a requirement of using public transport...bus, coach, train, tram, ferry and aircraft passengers must wear a face covering on their journey to help reduce the risk of transmission when social distancing is not always possible - with government also working with operators to ensure staff are provided with face coverings where appropriate.” So far Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, although recommending

face coverings in some situations, have not yet made them mandatory. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-coverings-to-become-mandatory-on-public-transport>



Secondly, there is also the instruction to passengers from the Govt. here (item 10): “From 15 June, you must wear a face covering on public transport.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home#face-coverings>

The definition of ‘bus’ will almost certainly include a CT minibus (9-16 passenger seats) but the directives have not been explicit about the need to wear a mask in taxi or private hire vehicles, which potentially leaves car scheme passengers outside of the requirement. However, we would strongly recommend that all CT passengers and drivers (regardless of the kind of service or vehicle being used) wear a face covering from 15 June, if not sooner.

### Sources of Face Coverings

It is important that face coverings for passengers do not place any additional demands on medical-grade face masks. In the case of CT passengers who may be

unable to procure their own, it is recommended that the operator issues a mask to each passenger - fabric masks can be easily washed and reused. The Govt. has encouraged people to make their own (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>) or they can be bulk purchased commercially with prices typically starting at around £3 per unit. The other option that CTs might pursue is to contact The Big Community Sew. This is a resource and network of volunteers who have come together "to help ensure that every person in every community in Britain has the face covering they need. There are around six million sewing machines in homes across the UK and if every one of those machines can be used to make just a dozen face coverings that would be enough for every person in the UK." It is possible that a local sewing group can produce coverings to order for a CT operator. (<https://www.bigcommunitysew.co.uk/>)



In Cambridge, community transport services have benefitted from face coverings via the voluntary efforts of CommunityMasks4NHS, whose project has been featured in a new film. (<https://www.cambridgenetwork.co.uk/news/mask-makers-make-thousands-nhs-charities-and-star-film>)

### Call for Local Assets to Be Transferred to Community Groups

Think Tank Localis has produced a report Local Delivery – Protecting Social Infrastructure which argues that the energisation of volunteering and community spirit as a result of COVID-19 should be capitalised on by central and local government by way of asset transfer and grassroots support for voluntary sector bodies. One of the recommendations of the report is that "Local authorities should promote investment in community groups as a positive factor in the evaluation of social value elements when awarding public contracts." This latter point is has been voiced before but is no less valid at a time

when the voluntary sector has proved itself such an essential support network. (<http://www.localis.org.uk/news/empower-covid-community-renewal-sink-grass-roots-recovery-hopes-localis-report-warns/>)

### Notable CT Responses from Around the Country

Lothian Community Transport Services has closed both its offices but continues to operate a number of Community Bus routes.



Training & Personnel Manager Kenny Duncan also reports: "we're involved in collecting food from a central distribution hub (using Midlothian Council's Training Lorry) and supplying eight local foodbanks in Midlothian." (<https://www.lcts.org.uk/index.html>)

South East Dorset Community Accessible Transport (SEDCAT) provided a much-appreciated service for one of its users: "Janet contacted us following a recommendation as in her own words 'I didn't know where to turn'. At risk and needing help, she had to get to her husband's funeral. On her own with just our driver Adrian, she was able to say a final farewell. 'I can't thank you enough'" (<https://twitter.com/sedcatCT/status/126846634001611777>)



Nottingham Community Transport took the decision to proceed with its Annual General Meeting using remote technology as it had the urgent need to vote in a new chair.



General Manager Ian Combellack (above) said "We held the meeting using Zoom. The main problem was the members who were not very confident using a computer, but we sent out clear instructions. Because we only have a small number of members it wasn't too much of a problem, but this could be an issue if there are a lot of users. To save any interruptions we asked people to refrain from asking questions until the end of each item. With the right person chairing / managing this, it worked well for us." Ian says he is considering holding further trustee meetings using Zoom.

Northampton Community Transport has been in the news with its shopping and delivery service: "In the past eight weeks, Northampton Community Transport has completed over 1,100 lifeline shopping trips and collected 29 monthly prescriptions for isolated people in Northampton as part of their voluntary door-to-door scheme. Every household the drivers shop for is offered ongoing support and contacted on a weekly basis to check if they need anything further, which includes more than 50 support referrals from the borough council," reports the Northampton Chronicle & Echo.

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/people/northampton-charity-has-completed-1100-shopping-trips-isolated-residents-need-financial-help-2876333>



Fellrunner Community Transport in Cumbria has delivered "400 bags of craft equipment, stationery, reading books and sensory toys for children in Penrith and Eden who may be facing extra challenges," Cumbria Crack reports. This is an initiative of Penrith Town Council in partnership with Cumbria County Council Eden Local Committee, Barnardo's, and Fellrunner's volunteer drivers. It is supported by Cumbria Community Foundation COVID-19 Fund.

<https://www.cumbriacrack.com/2020/06/05/craft-bags-for-eden-children/>



Community Transport Glasgow has been involved in a community support hub the Tannahill Centre, which has benefitted from £60k from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund.

<https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/the-tannahill-centre-secures-over-60-000-of-funding-to-support-locals-during-coronavirus>



North Yorkshire County Council has produced a number of Youtube videos presenting case studies of various community support projects, interviewing volunteers and beneficiaries, including Hambleton Community Action and Ryedale Community Transport. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVdHCMIPXWM>. Read more here: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/support-isolated-and-shielded-continues>

Together Transport Services (Elmbridge, Surrey) have been providing support for the Walton Charity at two of its sheltered housing schemes with a six day a week delivery service. CEO Larry Dickens-Batten said "Some of the residents I have spoken to are feeling a loss of independence while in lockdown. Some are feeling anxious about the current situation. There is not much that we at Total Transport Services can do, but time is something we do have. When dropping off shopping I try to stay for a chat at the door (wearing a mask and PPE). I hope this helps to keep up morale and make residents feel a bit more connected to the outside world."

<https://www.waltoncharity.org.uk/local-minibus-provides-lifeline-for-sheltered-housing-residents>



ABILITY Community Transport (Northamptonshire) has, like many CTs, been keeping in touch with its users by phone. It has also launched a 'virtual bus' in the form of group chat sessions to enable passengers to keep in touch with one another and benefit from the social contact that they have been missing since the minibus services were restricted. <https://abilitycic.org.uk/2020/04/01/join-us-on-the-virtual-bus/>



**Charity Bank Funding Sources**  
Charity Bank has produced a useful webpage COVID-19 Emergency Funding for Charities and Social Sector Organisations which provides information and links on a range of funding sources that CTs might apply for. <https://charitybank.org/news/covid-19-emergency-funding-for-charities-and-social-sector-organisations>





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