



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 – Latest on the Guidance

From 15 June, English Health Protection regulations have made the wearing of face coverings mandatory on buses, coaches, trams, ferries, aircraft and trains. 'Public Transport' as defined under the regulation would include s22 services but not extend to s19 services. It specifically excludes school transport services, taxis and private hire vehicles. s19 CT operators may choose to include the wearing of face coverings as part of their own conditions of carriage. Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland at present are recommending face coverings but not seeking enforcement.



On services where it is mandatory, there are some passengers who are exempted including:

-) children under the age of 11
-) an employee of the transport operator, when they are acting in the course of their employment (e.g. drivers).

Additionally passengers can refrain from wearing a mask if they have a 'reasonable excuse' and the Govt. lists these as follows:

-) "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 providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading 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."

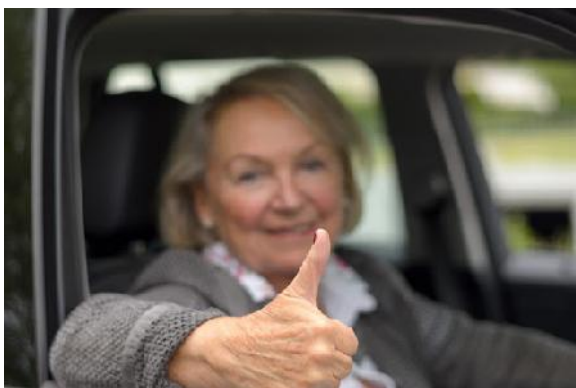
DfT's Tim Devereil (LT COVID Response Division) has also confirmed the following: "The above list of exemptions is not exhaustive and would extend to someone who has a justifiable reason for not wearing one on the grounds of health or disability not outlined above." This would suggest

that many of the typical CT passengers could also be exempted.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings>

Insurance for Drivers Age 70 or Over

There is a large number of CT drivers in the over-70 age group, mostly volunteers. Many have been keen to keep driving during the crisis, despite the potentially increased risk that they face. Some CT operators have stood down drivers in this age group for their own safety. It should be noted, however, that some insurers have now withdrawn cover from drivers who are 70 or over on the basis that they fall into a higher risk group who should be shielded, regardless of general health. This is frustrating to those CT projects that have had no alternative than to continue to use those older drivers who are keen to keep driving despite the risk. One solution is to approach an alternative insurer that is willing to provide cover. If lack of insurance is preventing operations, it would be worth investigating a temporary policy with a different provider. Generally, this is another outcome of the CT sector having been reliant upon older volunteers; the new surge of volunteers as a result of COVID-19 could create an opportunity for CTs to develop a younger volunteering resource.



Bus Drivers & COVID-19 Tests

Although COVID-19 testing was extended to bus drivers a few weeks ago, it is now proposed that drivers will be able to be routinely tested, whereas previously they had to be showing symptoms before a test. The process by which CT drivers might avail themselves of this useful facility is less clear at present, as local testing capacity varies considerably. We would be interested

to hear of any CT operator who has managed to get drivers tested.



<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#history>

Sustainable Transport Partners: Joint Statement on Covid-19 Recovery

The Community Transport Association has joined Bus Users, Campaign for Better Transport, Community Rail Network, Collaborative Mobility UK (CoMoUK), Greener Journeys, Living Streets and Sustrans in a joint statement which identifies a "chance to reimagine our transport priorities, with people's health and wellbeing, communities, and our environment at the forefront." CTA Chief Executive Bill Freeman said: "As lockdown restrictions begin to be eased, and with many people starting to travel again, CTA has joined an alliance of charities and NGOs in highlighting the importance of public, community and shared transport, combined with walking and cycling, to our communities' recovery, their health, wellbeing and the environment. At CTA, we're going to be sharing our specific plans for how to support the community transport sector as it starts to emerge from lockdown, and we felt that it was also important to add our voice to this joint statement."

<https://ctauk.org/sustainable-transport-partners-statement/>



D1 Licence Renewals

Thanks to the persistence of John Philips at Go Start Community Transport (Sudbury, Suffolk), DVLA has clarified its position on D1 licence renewals, which is not positive. Gemma Devonald (Driver Licensing Policy) stated that "DVLA is aware of the current difficulties drivers are having in trying to obtain medical examination reports to renew their driving entitlement. Our focus has been to help keep drivers on the road and vital supply chains moving during the coronavirus pandemic...The Agency is not currently processing applications for a renewal of C1 and D1 (101) on car licences first issued before 1997, unless drivers can provide a D4 medical report. If drivers cannot provide a D4, they should not apply to renew this entitlement at this time. These arrangements are exceptional. The Government has had to balance the need to keep drivers on the road in the current crisis and the risks to road safety. The scope of the arrangements are considered to be a reasonable balance in present circumstances. The arrangements will be kept under review as the situation develops. In the meantime, drivers can renew their ordinary driving entitlement at www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence-at-70. Drivers can then renew their C1 and D1 entitlement at a later date when they can obtain a medical examination from a qualified doctor who is registered and licensed to practice in the UK."



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

Notable CT Activities from Around the Country

Paisley Bingo Bus - the importance of bingo to many users will be familiar to many CT operators. The BBC has reported on a community group in Ferguslie Park that has decided to take the bingo to its users via a community minibus. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-scotland-52996859/the-bus-bringing-bingo-to-the-streets>



Community Action Dacorum has seen a recent volunteer Angela Aikman featured in the local press. Angela is an example of a new volunteer who has come forward during the crisis. She told Hemel Today "This is my first volunteering job, but volunteering is something that I have always wanted to do but never got around to doing. Last Christmas I thought about trying to find something to do along the lines of being a 'buddy' for someone but with work and other commitments never got round to doing it. A friend shared the Community Action Dacorum post on the Store to Door scheme on Facebook and I thought why not apply?"

<https://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/news/people/hemel-hempstead-woman-volunteers-do-grocery-shopping-residents-who-are-self-isolating-2880692#gsc.tab=0>



Out & About Community Transport has partnered with Curragh Community Development Association and Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre to launch the Meals Project which the Mid Ulster Mail reports "has grown week on week starting with 49 on the first day to 103 meals scheduled to go out on Saturday. A total of 1000 meals have now been delivered... Ashley Keane, Manager with Out & About Community Transport says: 'It's unbelievable how much the members look forward to the weekly call from staff.'

Lockdown and Self Isolation has been extremely difficult for many of our members who were so used to getting out and about with our rural transport service so this new initiative is going some way to alleviate the anxieties of the current lockdown situation."

<https://www.midulstermail.co.uk/news/people/mid-ulster-meals-project-delivers-its-1000th-meal-those-need-2879893>



West Lancashire Dial-a-Ride has now adopted a new payment system. Manager Philip Walker has described the "rather smart bulkheads and fare pay stations for card and cash" that have been installed in their vehicles.



In an interesting plan for the post-COVID period, Age UK Northamptonshire has announced that its shopping and hot meals delivery services launched when its day centres closed in March are to be made permanent services. Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire reports: "Clients who had been attending the day centres and benefitting from social contact, hot meals, haircuts and baths, were no longer able to access that support. Older people in general, especially those with health conditions, were advised to self-isolate which meant getting access to essential grocery shopping, medication and hot meals became extremely difficult for many. In response to this, the charity quickly set

up emergency deliveries, so far providing 2754 meals, 1627 loads of shopping, collected 201 prescriptions and provided transport 14 times to appointments... Given the growth in demand and the likelihood that even after lockdown is lifted, older people will need to remain cautious, the charity has implemented ways to make the services sustainable."

<http://www.voluntaryimpact.org.uk/news/>



East Teignbridge Community Transport Association (Dawlish) has benefitted from a grant from Devon County Council's Prompt Action Fund, reports the Mid Devon Advertiser. "The service has also been one of 12 organisations that has been supporting the community under the 'Helping Dawlish' initiative with food deliveries and collections to the wider community... Since the start of lockdown, the East Teignbridge CTA has helped more than 80 passengers make essential journeys to hospitals, GP practices and respite care transfers. The funding from the Prompt Action Fund has supported the cost of vehicle maintenance and fuel, as well as PPE equipment and vehicle sanitisation to ensure safety and wellbeing of community members."

<http://www.middevonadvertiser.co.uk/article.cfm?id=119226&headline=Prompt%20Action%20Fund%20helps%20Dawlish%20community%20transport%20group%20ferry%20passengers§ion1s=news&searchyear=2020>



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