

Face coverings to become mandatory on public transport

- government asks transport operators in England to make wearing face coverings a requirement of using public transport from 15 June to coincide with the next stage of carefully easing restrictions
- 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
- guidance remains to work from home if you can and avoid public transport where possible

The government will work with operators to make it mandatory for passengers to wear face coverings when using public transport in England, the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced today (4 June 2020).

Wherever possible people should continue to avoid public transport and walk, cycle or drive, but for some people this may not be an option. Transport usage has been slowly increasing, including on the tube which has seen around a 20% rise this week compared to last week.

When necessary to use public transport people may be more likely to be in enclosed spaces for longer periods of time where we know there is a greater risk of the spread of the virus and social distancing is likely to be difficult to follow consistently. This differs from enclosed spaces like shops, for example, where people can more easily go outside if social distancing is not possible and where shop owners can place limits on the number of customers allowed inside at any one time. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has set out that using face coverings in this setting can provide some small additional protection to fellow passengers and can help people to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus if they are suffering from coronavirus, but not showing symptoms.

Speaking at the Downing Street coronavirus briefing, Grant Shapps confirmed the government is asking operators to introduce face coverings as a requirement for travel from 15 June. The government will also work closely with the transport industry to help them implement the plans.

The changes will be made under legislation such as the National Rail Conditions of Travel and Public Service Vehicle Regulations for buses. While the government expects the vast majority of people to comply with the changes, operators will be able to refuse travel or issue penalty fines for those who fail to wear a face covering, in a similar way to the rules on having a ticket for travel. British Transport Police will also support the implementation of these changes.

Social distancing and hand washing remain by far the most important disease

prevention measures but it is also vital all passengers travelling on buses, coaches, trains, trams, ferries and aircraft should wear a face covering and the government will also work with operators to ensure staff are provided with, and wear face coverings, where appropriate for their role.

People should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before putting their face covering on and after taking it off and it is important that people don't touch their face covering when wearing it, where possible, to avoid hand to mask transmission of the virus.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

People should continue to avoid public transport wherever possible. But, as restrictions are carefully eased when it is safe to do so, it's likely that we will see more people needing to use public transport.

So, while respecting social distancing and maintaining good hand hygiene remain the most important steps we can all take to stay safe, wearing a face covering can play a role in helping us to protect each other.

This is about the small changes we can take to help control the virus, which is why I urge everyone using transport to wear a face covering, to help keep us all safer.

Face coverings are not the same as face masks. It is important that people do not use medical grade PPE masks to ensure these remain available for frontline staff. Last month, the government set out advice for people on how to make their own face coverings easily at home, using scarves or other textile items. These face coverings should cover the mouth and nose while allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably and can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head to give a snug fit.

Paul Plummer, Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, said:

Wearing face coverings on trains will help to ensure that those who need to travel by rail can do so with confidence. Greater use of face coverings will boost the other measures we are putting in place to keep people safe, like more thorough cleaning, improved information on potential crowding and one-way systems at busier stations.

To ease pressure on public transport, the government has announced measures to encourage people to choose other forms of transport, including [£2 billion for cycling](#), and the acceleration of e-scooter trials across the country. To capitalise on the increase in cycling uptake in recent months, the government is also working hard on measures to get more people commuting by bike with initiatives such as the Cycle to Work scheme to help with the cost of bikes,

including e-bikes.

PM Global Vaccine Summit closing remarks: 4 June 2020

As we bring this summit to a conclusion, let me thank you all for the generosity of your contributions today.

Together, we have replenished this alliance, securing – and I'm the lucky one that gets to make the big announcement – a fantastic \$8.8bn for Gavi's vital work over the next five years.

And I want to say a particular thank you to Bill and Melinda Gates for their generosity, their philanthropy, yet again, and their continued leadership in humanity's battle against disease.

Our ancestors had to live with the unavoidable reality that killer pathogens could at any time strike down their children, imposing an incalculable burden of sorrow.

Yet, today, thanks to the ingenuity of Edward Jenner, a British doctor from Gloucestershire who pioneered the world's first vaccine, the simple act of inoculating our children can save lives many times over.

Vaccines work.

People who are vaccinated protect themselves and the rest of the population by lowering the spread and risk of infection.

Gavi's work on routine immunisation is the strongest shield against outbreaks of infectious diseases, and so it is that our collective efforts at this Summit will now save up to 8 million lives.

Our actions – your actions – will also support healthcare systems in the world's poorest countries, which are increasingly victims of coronavirus.

So today, as we make the choice to unite and forge a path of global co-operation, let us also renew our collective resolve to find the vaccine that can in the end defeat coronavirus.

For our part, the UK has already committed up to £764 million for the global coronavirus response.

And I'm proud to say that some of the most promising research into vaccines is happening here, supported by our Vaccine Taskforce.

We are pioneering the innovative collaborations that will be needed to

manufacture and distribute a vaccine, once found, like the partnership between AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford.

So as we conclude today, let us unite to stop a disease like coronavirus causing such devastation ever again.

Just as we have great military alliances like NATO – and I hope that those of you not in NATO know what I mean – where countries collaborate on building their collective military defence, so we now need that same spirit of collaboration and collective defence against the common enemy of disease.

It will require a new international effort to co-operate on the surveillance and sharing of information that can underpin a global alert system so we can rapidly identify any future outbreak.

And it will need a radical scaling up of our global capacity to respond, exactly as Bill [Gates] has set out.

So just as Britain has been honoured to host this summit today, you can count on our full contribution as together we rise to fulfil the greatest shared endeavour of our lifetimes: the triumph of humanity over disease, now and for the generations that follow.

Thank you.

[Clive Dix appointed Deputy Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce](#)

News story

The government has today appointed Clive Dix as Deputy Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce



The government has today (04 June) appointed Clive Dix as Deputy Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce to help lead efforts to find and manufacture a

coronavirus vaccine.

A leading figure in drug development, Clive Dix is CEO of [C4X Discovery](#), a pioneering drug discovery company, and is well qualified to help lead the Vaccine Taskforce, with extensive experience as a scientist and managing pharmaceutical companies.

His knowledge will be critical in supporting the Taskforce and the government in their efforts to find an effective vaccine – one of the long-term solutions to controlling the pandemic – and ensuring this is available to the public in large volumes.

The government established the Taskforce in March 2020, and it reports directly to the Business Secretary. Kate Bingham was [announced as the Taskforce's Chair](#) on 16 May 2020.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The UK is leading the global response to finding a vaccine, and the work being done by the Taskforce complements and supports efforts worldwide.

As Deputy Chair of the Taskforce, Clive will bring his wealth of experience to support the vital efforts to discover a vaccine and ensure it is readily available to all who need it once found.

Chair of the Vaccine Taskforce, Kate Bingham said:

I am thrilled that Clive has accepted our invitation to join the Vaccine Taskforce as Deputy Chair. Clive brings a long and distinguished career in discovering and developing novel vaccines and pharmaceuticals for the treatment of serious diseases.

We are delighted that Clive has agreed to share his expertise to enable us to accelerate the development and manufacture of a coronavirus vaccine.

Deputy Chair of the Vaccine Taskforce, Clive Dix said:

I am honoured to be asked to take up this role. The pursuit of a vaccine for COVID-19 is one of the most important parts of the country's response to the virus and I look forward to working with Kate, applying all of my knowledge and experience to help the taskforce deliver an effective vaccine.

Transport Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 4 June 2020

Good afternoon.

And welcome to today's Downing Street press conference.

I'm joined today by Sir Peter Hendy, Chair of Network Rail. Peter was Commissioner of transport for the London Olympics and the person who has helped oversee the restart of our transport system.

Let me start by updating you on the latest information from the government's COBR data file.

First slide please...

This slide shows data on the use of different types of transport.

These graphs show significant falls in the use public transport – rail, buses, the tube in London – even before lockdown was introduced on 23 March. This is welcome, it shows the public have responded positively to our requests to avoid public transport wherever possible.

The use of motor vehicles fell substantially initially and has since risen steadily, though not back to the levels seen in mid-March. Again, this is what we would expect as we have introduced some easements to the lockdown and encouraged people to return to work.

One form of transport which has seen a significant increase is cycling – it is great to see people switching to a clean, green mode of transport with significant public health benefits.

Second slide please...

This slide shows tests and cases.

The number of tests carried out or posted out in the UK has risen past 5 million for the first time, to 5,005,565. This includes a record 220,057 tests carried out or posted out yesterday.

281,661 people have tested positive, an increase of 1,805 cases since yesterday. The graph shows a steadily falling number of identified cases on a 7-day rolling average, despite the increase in testing.

Third slide please...

This slide shows the latest data from hospitals.

505 people were admitted to hospital with coronavirus in England on 2 June, up marginally from 475 a week ago, but down from the peak of 3,121 on 2 April.

604 coronavirus patients are in mechanical ventilation beds in the UK, down from 783 a week ago, and down from a peak of 3,301 on 12 April.

Fourth slide please...

This slide shows what is happening in hospitals across the country.

There are now 7,312 people in hospital with coronavirus in the UK, down 15% from 8,558 a week ago and down from a peak of 20,699 on 12 April.

As the graphs show, while there is some variation, most nations and regions of the UK are broadly following a similar pattern.

Last slide please...

This slide shows the daily figures for those who have sadly lost their lives after testing positive for coronavirus.

Across all settings, the total number of deaths now stands at 39,904. That's an increase of 176 fatalities since yesterday.

When measured by a 7-day rolling average, the daily number of deaths currently stands at 241, down from a peak of 943 on 14 April.

These figures are a reminder that COVID-19 still represents a very real threat...

That the fight still goes on to defeat it...

And that there are tragically still too many people across the country who are losing loved ones.

Our thoughts are with them all.

Transport leading green recovery

As we've made clear in recent weeks, our road to recovery must be carefully and cautiously managed.

Most importantly, we must avoid a second infection spike.

This careful, deliberate approach has been central to the restart of public transport.

In advance of previous easing of the total lockdown, we ensured transport availability was increased to allow for adequate social distancing.

In addition, we also announced measures to help people choose other forms of transport.

For example, with a record [£2 billion investment in cycling and walking...](#)

As well as the acceleration of e-scooter trials, brought forward to the end of this month.

Meticulous planning – alongside the considerable effort of passengers avoiding public transport – has worked well so far.

There has been an absence of crowding, even as passenger numbers have ticked up... partly thanks to the work of Sir Peter.

But these challenges are about to increase.

We expect – conditions permitting – that the next easing of restrictions will occur on Monday 15th June.

Non-essential shops will re-open and some children will return to secondary school, if it is safe to do so. That means there will be more pressure on our public transport.

To help meet that demand, we're ramping up services on buses, trains and trams; with substantial government funding.

But still we need to do more.

So today I want to highlight measures to help keep us all safer, and reduce the risks of the Coronavirus coming back.

There are three points I want to highlight.

Work from home if possible

First, let me reiterate – and this is important – if you can work from home, you should continue to do so.

If you cannot work from home, you should avoid public transport wherever possible.

And if you must use public transport, you should follow the guidance, including avoiding the rush hour.

Updated guidance – face coverings

Second, I can announce that, as of Monday 15th June, face coverings will become mandatory on public transport.

That doesn't mean surgical masks, which we must keep for clinical settings. It means the kind of face covering you can easily make at home.

There'll be exceptions to the rule for very young children, disabled people and those with breathing difficulties.

But broadly, as we come through this phase, we're doing what many other

countries have asked transport users to do.

And as passenger numbers increase, and we expect this trend to continue, we need to ensure every precaution is taken, on buses, trains, aircraft and ferries.

With more people using transport, the evidence suggests that wearing a face covering offers some – albeit limited – protection against the spread of the virus.

A face covering helps protect our fellow passengers. It is something that we can each do to help each other.

And whilst it also remains true that measures like maintaining social distance and washing your hands remain most critical, we also know that, on public transport, keeping two-metres apart is not always possible, all of the time.

Indeed, the guidance explicitly recognises this fact.

So, when more people return to the network, from the 15th June onwards, they will be required to wear a face covering on our transport network.

We'll make these rules changes under the National Rail Conditions of Travel and the Public Service Vehicle Regulations for buses.

This will mean you can be refused travel if you don't comply and could be fined.

Alongside transport operators, this will be enforced by the British Transport Police, as necessary.

But I expect the vast majority of people won't need to be forced into this, because wearing a face-covering helps to protect others, and most people simply want to help defeat this disease.

Of course, frontline staff – those in contact with passengers, doing such an important job at this crucial time – will also need to wear face coverings.

In the coming days, the government will work with unions, who have been supportive for which I am grateful, transport operators and police to ensure they have the supplies they need to be safe and provide reassurance to the public.

These measures apply in England, and we are working with the devolved administrations ahead of implementation.

Active and alternatives to public transport

Third, to ease pressure on public transport, I want to update you on the measures we're taking to boost alternative ways to travel.

Now that vehicle showrooms are open again, there's a growing range of

electric cars, mopeds, motorbikes on sale...

And as our economy gets moving, their popularity will continue to increase.

Later this month we'll be introducing the Fix Your Bike Voucher – worth 50 quid.

We'll have hundreds-of-thousands more bikes roadworthy as a result of this programme.

Then there's the Cycle To Work scheme which enables employees to buy a tax free bike – an effective saving of 25 – 39%.

And that scheme has been extended to cover e-bikes as well, meaning that cyclists can cover longer distances by getting assistance on those uphill stretches.

And this is a great time to start using them...

As we redesign our street landscape to cope with millions more cyclists and pedestrians in the months ahead.

The evidence is that commuters are already responding...

Despite fewer people travelling overall during this crisis, we've seen around a 100% increase in weekday cycling.

And at weekends, that increase has been up to around 200%, compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.

We want to use this recovery to permanently change the way we travel.

With huge levels of investment....

We're bringing forward green transport improvements that otherwise would have taken years, if not decades, to achieve.

In the short-term, whilst there's still a threat from the virus, they'll help millions of people avoid public transport journeys.

And in the longer term, they'll help transform our country into a lower carbon, cleaner and greener place to live.

Conclusion

Our history shows us how quickly we can adapt as a nation.

Just as we did nearly 200 years ago, when Britain invented the railway...

And just as we did in the 20th century, when we embraced the motor car...

And then in the 1950s, when we launched the first passenger jet airliner, coincidentally designed and built in my Hatfield constituency.

Each of these transport revolutions was triggered by a unique alignment of people and events.

Brilliant engineers and entrepreneurs.

Cutting-edge new technologies.

Supportive governments.

And the needs of citizens.

Combining to bring about important change.

And now we stand on the verge of a new transport revolution...

This time, not limited to one particular means of travel, but rather to all forms of transport...

A green transport revolution...

Which will help us rebuild a stronger, more prosperous Britain, as well as a cleaner and healthier one.

UK aid-backed drone technology supports Ghana's coronavirus fight

A partnership between UK aid and Gavi: the Vaccine Alliance, is supporting the Government of Ghana to use Zipline drones to collect coronavirus test samples from across the country.

This world-leading technology has increased Ghana's ability to deliver vaccines for diseases like yellow fever and polio and collect testing kits for coronavirus, particularly in rural areas where access by road is difficult.

Together, the UK government and Gavi alongside the Gates Foundation and delivery company UPS Foundation have funded Zipline's drone stations.

Often in hard-to-reach areas, these stations allow health experts to safely collect test samples and deliver these to one of Ghana's testing laboratories. The stations are also used to load the drones with medical supplies to make sure they reach those most in need, as well as health workers supporting communities in rural areas in small community health centres.

Iain Walker, British High Commissioner to Ghana said:

“It is only through global collaboration that we will overcome this global pandemic. The partnership between UK aid and Gavi is an example of this collaboration in action.

“By supporting Gavi, UK aid in Ghana is helping to save lives by tracking coronavirus, getting medical equipment to those most in need and ensuring that children across the country have access to vaccines for the diseases that still needlessly devastate communities.

“I am proud that the UK government’s recent pledge of the equivalent of £330million a year for the next 5 years will support Gavi’s lifesaving work across the world, protecting lives and allowing developing countries to focus more resources on tackling coronavirus.”

Accessibility to transport and poor roads means that it takes days for samples to arrive from rural areas at Ghana’s test centres. This also leaves those transporting the tests open to transmission of coronavirus.

With UK aid support through Gavi, Zipline’s drones are transporting test samples in a matter of hours meaning that cases are identified and treated quickly, lessening the spread of infection. Already coronavirus test samples collected from more than 1,000 health centres in rural areas across Ghana have been taken to laboratories in Accra and Kumasi.

As well as returning coronavirus tests and medical equipment, Zipline’s drones are also transporting immunisation kits protecting children from deadly disease such as diphtheria and measles which still impact communities across Ghana every year.

Cyril Nogier, Gavi Senior Country Manager for Ghana said:

“The government of Ghana has shown incredible commitment to immunisation for many years, working hard to ensure no child goes without protection against deadly, preventable diseases.

“Right now Ghana leads the world in its use of drone technology, which has already helped thousands of children in remote areas get access to vaccines. I’m delighted that this technology, with vital support from the UK and other partners, is now playing a role in the country’s fight against coronavirus.”

On 4 June, the UK government will host Global Vaccine Summit – this will support Gavi to gather much needed funding to deliver vaccines against diseases such as measles, polio and cholera around the world and to ensure global access to all new coronavirus vaccines.

Globally the UK government has already pledged up to £764 million (\$935.6 million) to combat the outbreak of coronavirus, and in April the UK pledged equivalent to £330 million a year over the next five years to Gavi. This vital funding ensures that through Gavi, UK aid will continue to support innovation such as the drone technology used in Ghana, saving lives around the world. In Africa, the UK has pledged to invest up to £20 million in the African Union’s new ‘African Union Covid19 Response Fund’ to tackle coronavirus and save lives.