

Guidance for Community Transport

Last updated on 29 July

This document was last updated on 29 July – the information contained may be superseded by the most up to date guidance at ctauk.org/covid19-guidance/.

As the national membership body for the community transport sector, it's never been more important for CTA to provide timely and relevant advice and information to our members as we navigate the effects of coronavirus on our sector. As our members begin to re-start their services, we're here to provide you with the support you need to do what you do safely, securely and sustainably. Remember you can contact our advice team on advice@ctauk.org and join colleagues across the sector in our online Advice Drop-ins every Friday 11-12pm.

What information are you looking for?

If you're viewing this PDF on a computer, you can click the links below to jump to the section of our guidance that's most relevant.

General guidance

- [What is the latest general coronavirus guidance where I am?](#)
- [Am I only allowed to run essential services?](#)

Restarting services

- [What is CTA's guidance on re-starting services?](#)
- [What's the most up to date guidance on social distancing where I am?](#)
- [What do I need to consider when creating coronavirus specific risk assessments?](#)
- [What is the guidance on the use of PPE and face coverings?](#)
- [How do I support staff and volunteers to get back to work?](#)
- [What about if my volunteers are over 70?](#)
- [How do we make our vehicles as safe as possible?](#)
- [What is your advice for running a community car scheme?](#)
- [What measures will help us support our passengers and keep them safe?](#)

Additional information

- [Resources and funding programmes in response to coronavirus](#)
- [What is the latest information on the coronavirus job retention scheme?](#)
- [What other advice is out there?](#)

Resources to support CTA members

We've put together a number of resources available to download to support community transport providers as they begin to re-start their services. Some of these are resources that we've put together, and others are resources from CTA members that we thought are worth sharing. We're adding new resources all the time, so keep checking back.

- [Resources on risk assessment and risk management](#)
 - [Resources on supporting staff and volunteers](#)
 - [Resource on ten ways to do things differently when restarting services](#)
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Guidance for community transport providers

Below you can read through all the latest guidance for community transport providers. If you want to quickly find a specific topic or issue you can use our table of contents above.

The Latest Guidance from the UK and Devolved Governments

You can always find the most relevant and up to date guidance in the following places:

- [NHS: latest information and advice](#)
- UK Government: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- Wales: [gov.wales/coronavirus-covid19](https://www.gov.wales/coronavirus-covid19)
- Scotland: [gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- Northern Ireland: publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus

When planning your journeys, you can refer to the information on this page which summarises some areas of the UK Government's guidance but please also read in full the relevant guidance for transport operators from the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive. There are links to these documents below, as well as some other relevant information.

UK Government

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

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Scottish Government

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A guide for transport operators in Scotland to keep their staff and those using their services safe](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Advice on how to travel safely](#)

Welsh Government

- [Restarting public transport: guidance for operators](#)
- [Travelling safely during the coronavirus](#)

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Am I still only allowed to run essential services?

Guidance from the UK Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive no longer states that public transport should only be used for essential journeys, as has been the case up until now. The Welsh Government however still states individuals should only travel for essential journeys.

Whilst people are still encouraged to limit their use of public transport, and it is still recommended that people should walk, cycle or drive wherever possible, this gives more scope for community transport providers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to gradually re-introduce more services that they wouldn't have previously been able to run. Please note that this does not apply to car schemes, as shared car journeys are still only allowed for essential travel.

The guidance below looks at our recommendations of what you need to consider when running any services in the near future.

Am I allowed to leave the house to operate/coordinate any services we're running?

According to the UK Government guidance, everyone that can work from home should still work from home. However, for most who work in the community transport sector, working from home is not practical. If you can't work from home, you are therefore allowed to travel to your place of work to run your services.

Please note this is with the proviso that you do not have to self-isolate due to yourself or anyone in your household displaying symptoms of coronavirus or coming into contact with someone who has symptoms, or the virus itself. If anyone involved in running your services should be self-isolating due to these reasons, they should not be coming into work.

- Any workplaces must follow social distancing guidance. [The UK Government has put together information on how to work safely during coronavirus, which you can find here.](#)
 - [Workplace safety guidance from the Welsh Government can be found here.](#)
 - [Workplace safety guidance from the Scottish Government can be found here.](#)
 - [Workplace safety guidance from the Northern Ireland Executive can be found here.](#)

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Restarting your services safely

Our guidance on restarting your services

Guidance from the UK Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive no longer states that public transport should only be used for essential journeys, as has been the case up until now. The Welsh Government however still states individuals should only travel for essential journeys.

Whilst people are still encouraged to limit their use of public transport, and it is still recommended that they should walk, cycle or drive wherever possible, this does give more scope for community transport providers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to gradually re-introduce more services that they wouldn't have previously been able to run. Please note that this does not apply to car schemes, as shared car journeys are still only allowed for essential travel.

Our guidance on re-starting services looks at our recommendations of what you need to consider when running any services in the near future.

Carrying passengers during the COVID-19 crisis is essentially a health and safety concern and as a CT operator you should work within your existing health and safety framework. Your designated health and safety representative should ensure that they are familiar with the range of government & official guidance that has been issued, and keep abreast of the frequent updates – these sources are listed below. You should ensure that at least one person is delegated this role, and that they have sufficient authority to enforce measures if needs be.

Advice and restrictions are changing on a day-by-day basis. We will endeavour to keep this information updated as government advice changes; however you should check the current position and advice in your area.

CTA has worked with the TAS Partnership to provide detailed guidance on how to restart and sustain your services. [You can download the document as a PDF here](#), or read its various sections below.

- [Social distancing](#)
- [PPE and face coverings](#)
- [Putting together a comprehensive risk assessment](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Supporting staff and volunteers](#)
- [Supporting passengers](#)
- [Your vehicles](#)
- [Car schemes](#)

General information on re-starting services

The COVID-19 crisis is a constantly changing situation, which means that you'll need to review your organisation's circumstances weekly, if not daily, based on the new information emerging and your own operational experience. You should also consider the local perspective, which may differ from the national one. Here's some actions you should put into place that'll help you meet those challenges:

- Undertake new risk assessments – these should detail all the steps that you've taken to reduce/eliminate the likelihood of virus transmission
- Update risk registers/documentation
- Ensure that your reporting and escalation systems are responsive and robust
- Your organisation should have a policy on what constitutes an 'essential journey' which will assist your risk management process - but note that government guidance that only 'essential journeys' should be made now only applies to car-sharing. But it still advises that 'public transport' is avoided if possible, and that some people, including those aged 70 or over, should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household, and that people who are vulnerable on health grounds should continue 'shielding'.
- Keep in active, regular and open communication with your trustee board – they should always be aware of new developments taking place in order to make informed decisions
- Keep in active, regular and open communication with stakeholders and funders – they should be aware of your organisation's service levels and changes put in place, and make sure those will not conflict with any contract terms
- Keep in active, regular and open communication with staff, volunteers and beneficiaries – they should always be aware of the steps implemented to safeguard them
- Make necessary adjustments to vehicles, buildings, systems and procedures – this may include an investment in materials that you may not have needed before (e.g. PPE)
- Check all insurances to ensure cover is maintained
- Before putting any changes to services into action, make sure you understand the levels of financial risk you will incur by doing so, and always seek out the various support fund that have been made available
- If offering new types of services, always check your VAT situation
- Wherever possible, maintain any activities that contribute to the safety of your operation (e.g. MiDAS, PATS, CPC, vehicle and equipment inspection and maintenance)

Social distancing

The principle of social distancing has been the universally adopted measure to contain the spread of COVID-19 with a two metre gap to be maintained where possible between any two or more people who do not live in the same household. All safety measures should embrace this rule but recognising that there are certain situations where this distance is physically impossible to maintain. For England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the governments have altered the rule to either two metres or one metre plus, where the 'plus' means that additional mitigation measures are in place.

In the case of CT operations, in addition to our extra sanitisation procedures these measures should include the use of face coverings by passengers and staff (when not driving). In implementing this relaxation, for example in determining how many seats to make available to passengers in a minibus, each operator will need to balance the needs of its passengers against the compromises that might be necessary when providing journeys. Note that you are concerned with managing risk to a reasonable level, not attempting to eliminate it.

Currently the two metre rule remains in force for Wales. This rule may be reviewed at a local level in England or devolved level across the UK. We will endeavour to keep this document updated as government advice changes, however you should check the current position and advice in your area.

Risk assessment and risk management

Although risk assessments should always target the specific circumstances of each operation, there is a number of issues that will commonly affect most operators:

- Older people and those with underlying health issues – given that most CT beneficiaries and some staff/volunteers fall into these categories, special attention should be paid to them
- Passengers – ensuring customers' basic needs are met and that they're not at risk of loneliness if unable to travel
- Vehicles – accommodating passengers while keeping social distance (boarding/alighting, seating layout), minimizing direct contact (cash handling, passenger assistance), cleaning and PPE
- Drivers/Passenger assistants – regular monitoring of health and wellbeing, social distance in the office/depot, provision of PPE

With the support of CTA members from across the UK, CTA have produced community transport specific templates and resources relating to COVID-19 risk assessments which CTA members can download from cta.uk.org/advice-resources/risk-assessment-and-management.

If you're not a CTA member, you can still download our 'How To' guide for risk assessments, as well as a COVID-19 specific risk assessment template below.

- [Download our risk assessment 'how to' guide here](#)
- [Download our COVID-19 specific risk assessment template here](#)

Use of PPE and face coverings

Face coverings are now compulsory on public transport in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

As these regulations include buses, this will be a requirement for those operating community transport services under a Section 22 permit. The requirements do not apply to:

- School transport services (children under the age of 11 are exempt in all circumstances).
- Taxi or private hire vehicles – although a taxi driver or private hire vehicle operator may refuse to accept passengers if they do not wear a face covering.
- Stations, stops and interchanges.
- The new rules do not extend to car schemes or those operating under a Section 19 permit; however, it is strongly advised that the same guidelines are followed. There are also circumstances where a passenger may be exempt from the requirements due to a reasonable excuse, which may include:
 - Where they cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering without severe distress or because of any physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability (within the meaning of [section 6 of the Equality Act 2010](#)).
 - Where they are travelling with, or providing assistance to, another person who relies on lip-reading to communicate.
 - Where they remove the face covering to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to themselves or others.
 - Where they are travelling to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and do not have a face covering with them.
 - To eat or drink where it is reasonably necessary to do so.
 - Where they have to remove their face covering to take medication.
 - Where they are requested to remove the face covering by a constable or other relevant person.

The mandatory requirements do not require staff to wear a face covering. However, the guidance highlights that face coverings offer some benefits in situations where social distancing is difficult to

manage, such as when working in passenger facing roles. How you translate this guidance into a policy for your drivers and passenger assistants should be informed by a risk assessment.

It is important to note that a face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare workers as part of their personal protective equipment. A face covering covers a person's nose and mouth and can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head. [There are useful guides online which show you how a face covering can be made at home](#). They are now also becoming more commonly available in local shops and supermarkets.

- [UK Government guidance on face coverings can be found here.](#)
- [Scottish Government guidance can be found here.](#)
- [Welsh Government guidance can be found here.](#)
- [Northern Ireland Executive guidance can be found here.](#)

[If you are using any medical Personal Protective Equipment, you can find the UK Government's guidance on PPE use here.](#) It is aimed mainly towards medical professionals, but some elements may be useful for community transport providers running essential services.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Practical measures should be put into place in order to protect staff and volunteers, and you should be proactive in ensuring that those measures are complied with. Here's our recommendations:

- Provide PPE (despite face coverings being optional, these should still be provided, as well as gloves and on board cleaning materials) and adapt vehicles (protective screens)
- Monitor the health of frontline staff/volunteers closely, and (as and when possible) ensure they undergo tests
- Ensure that safety measures are put in place in order to better manage situations where staff/volunteers come into contact with each other (e.g. car sharing, shared office/depot spaces such as kitchens, toilets and break rooms)
- Keep an open line of communication with each member of your team. This will help you assess how comfortable they are in continuing to provide the services, what support they may need from you and if any existing underlying health issues may be a concern (this could extend to their immediate household).
- Evaluate if there's a need to deploy drivers deemed to be at risk due to age (over 70s) and/or health issues – bear in mind that some insurance companies have now withheld cover from drivers over 70 for CT operations.
- For those volunteer drivers deemed at risk due to age and other health issues, find other volunteering opportunities such as administration they could do at home or a befriending service.

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Resources for supporting your staff and volunteers

We've put together a number of resources on supporting your staff and volunteers as you re-start services. As with the risk assessment guide above, we're making these usually member only resources open access to help get services back up and running. If you're using these resources and aren't a CTA member, [you can find more information about CTA membership here](#).

How-to guide: supporting volunteers as services restart

This how to guide on supporting volunteers as services restart looks at the following topics:

- Retaining new volunteers who joined during lock-down
- Volunteer safety and training
- Supporting vulnerable volunteers
- Checklist for managing volunteers during COVID-19
- Other sources of guidance

[Download the how-to guide here.](#)

Checklists and guidance for community transport drivers

Our **returning drivers checklist** can be given to drivers and signed to show they understand your responsibilities and their responsibilities when operating a services.

Our **start of shift checklist for drivers** can be given to drivers and signed to show they have taken the necessary safety precautions ahead of their journey.

- [Download our returning drivers checklist](#)
- [Download our start of shift check-list](#)

Volunteers over 70

When considering how you want to manage volunteers returning, you should be aware that there is a possibility of some individuals being classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#). This is the category which will have received a letter from their GP advising them to shield. The guidance if you are in this category is that *'you're strongly advised to stay at home as much as possible and keep visits outside to a minimum (for instance once per day).'* Please also see the specific guidance for [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#). It would not currently be advisable for anyone in this group to return to a driving role. However, they may be able to offer support in other ways, such as telephone befriending.

For volunteers who are over 70, the current UK Government guidance defines them as [clinically vulnerable](#). *"This means that you are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. You are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household."* Again, please also see specific guidance for [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

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As the guidance is not as prescriptive for this group, we have heard of some individuals feeling that they would be happy to return to volunteering despite being at a higher risk. If this is something which you are considering, we would advise extreme caution and to ensure that you complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. It may not be helpful to create a blanket policy about whether to allow older volunteers to return or not. Instead, it may be more appropriate to consider each volunteer individually, the role they are volunteering for, and to create a specific risk assessment for each one. Although this process may be time consuming, it may help both you as an operator and the volunteer to feel more confident.

Where possible you should first consider offering volunteering roles which can be done from home. You could also consider offering roles where maintaining social distancing is easier, such as making deliveries. Where social distancing is not possible you will need to carefully assess what control measures you can put in place and whether you are then left with an acceptable level of risk. It may be worth discussing this with your insurers to understand what cover you have in place regarding volunteers.

NCVO have produced some guidance about [insurance for volunteers](#) and have also shared a useful webinar about Covid-19 and [managing risks](#).

Training

All frontline staff/volunteers should be given COVID-19 training on newly implemented operational procedures and safety measures. It is also important that you communicate the risk scenarios identified to your staff/volunteers and provide them with training on how to deal with potential occurrences (e.g. contact with persons showing symptoms, lost property, queues at shops).

Regular weekly briefings are recommended, especially with frontline staff. Make sure you keep records of all communications, as well as training provided.

If more specialised knowledge is required, always seek guidance and training input from the relevant experts.

How do we make our vehicles as safe as possible?

Vehicles are a fundamental component of the whole CT operation, and you should be very thorough at assessing potential risks. When implementing safety measures, consider the following:

- Cleanliness – sanitized wiping of all contact surfaces (seats, handles, grabs, seatbelts, wheelchair handles) between each passenger, deep cleaning after each shift
- Internal arrangements – where possible, fitting of protective screens between the passenger and driver, and for the passenger seating areas, removal (or cordoning out of use) of seats or spacing out of seats that are left in use
- Minimising/eliminating cash handling – this may mean using a credit/account system or adding facilities for receiving contactless card payments

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- Always consider if any changes you have made will impact on accessibility levels (e.g. emergency evacuation procedures)
- Car schemes have very limited ability to meet social distancing requirements; however cars should be subject to sanitised cleaning and, where possible, passengers should be seated in the rear nearside seat. Training should be provided to volunteer drivers using their own vehicles on how to safely and effectively clean their vehicle.

Please note: driver screens are intended to create a barrier against directly expelled droplets from coughs and sneezes or face to face conversation. They are not intended to encapsulate the driver or prevent all air flow.

Community car schemes

Whilst the guidance in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland no longer states that public transport must only be used for essential journeys, this is not the case for guidance on car sharing - **the 'essential journey' qualification is still in place for car-sharing guidance**, though not in taxi guidance.

For more information on what you need to consider when running car scheme journeys, take a look at our more detailed guidance for community car schemes below.

[Download our community car scheme guidance.](#)

Supporting passengers

It is imperative that operations are planned and delivered with the safety of passengers in mind. This means following strict social distancing and hygiene protocols. Here's our advice on keeping passengers safe when resuming services:

- Regularly communicate with passengers by informing them of your organisation's newly implemented measures – this includes the requirements that they must meet in order to be carried and that the service will be declined if a person (or anyone else in their household) is showing symptoms
- Taking account of government advice, make clear which kinds of journey are deemed allowable or essential and only agree to provide these services – this may vary depending upon the vehicle used and which part of the UK you are operating in. For example, a long journey in a car involves proportionately greater risk (to driver and passenger) of infection than a shorter journey in a minibus. But it will be reasonable (provided you have put in place the preventative hygiene measures identified above) to undertake the car journey where, for example, this is to facilitate a health appointment because the health risks from missing the appointment are likely to be greater than the minimal risk that arises from making the journey. Both driver and passenger should understand the risk and be making that journey on a voluntary basis.

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- If you're obliged (section 22 services or instructions from your commissioner) or have decided to insist on passengers covering their faces while travelling, it is a good idea to have a stock of these on the vehicle
- Where passengers require assistance, ensure that you understand what this will involve and that drivers agree to provide it. Alternatively, check if the passenger can be accompanied by another member of the household to provide any physical assistance
- For passengers who need a high degree of physical assistance, use of a wheelchair to get them into and off the vehicle may be safer, as the person is facing away from the driver/assistant and physical contact is limited. This may need to be approached sensitively with the passenger.

We've put together information for passengers which we recommend they read to understand their responsibilities and your responsibilities on board a service. [Download this resource here.](#)

More information

If you need any further support on re-starting your services, please don't hesitate to contact the CTA advice service via advice@ctauk.org.

Other useful information and resources

Funding programmes in response to coronavirus

We know that funding is a real concern for community transport providers at the moment, with many of their sources of income no longer being viable in the face of coronavirus, and many of their overheads still in place.

There are however, a number of different funding sources that are offering emergency funding to charities and organisations going through these sorts of difficulties.

We've put together a list of other potentially useful funds at ctauk.org/coronavirus-funding-and-resources/.

Guidance on the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention scheme.

Since the introduction of the coronavirus job retention scheme, many community transport operators, like many other businesses and organisations, were left with no choice but to furlough some or all of their employees.

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The coronavirus job retention scheme is now closed to new entrants, and UK Government have announced that the coronavirus job retention scheme will close on 31 October 2020, with the scheme gradually changing how it operates between now and then.

[You can the full details of the UK Government's changes to scheme here.](#)

[You can find plenty of useful and up to date information on the furlough scheme, including what is changing between now and October here.](#)

Resource: running services after lock-down - ten ways you could do things differently

As you begin to recover and restart, this how-to guide looks at 10 things that you can do which may consolidate and strengthen your services in the future. The guide includes tips and information on going cashless; digital fundraising; new ways of fundraising; engaging with local press; using social media; continuing new services; engaging volunteers; working in partnership; working with other community transport groups; and campaigning and influencing.

[Download the how-to guide here.](#)

What other advice is out there?

As mentioned on page 2 of this document, it's important to keep up to date with the latest advice from the UK and devolved governments.

NCVO have also produced advice and resources for voluntary organisations concerned about coronavirus including risk management processes and organisational planning:

- [NCVO: latest information and advice](#)

There is also specific advice and information from various other charities:

- [Diabetes UK](#) has provided an updated information page for people living with diabetes.
- [Asthma UK](#) has released a blog post with advice for people with asthma.
- [The British Heart Foundation](#) has published guidance for people with health problems.
- [The National Eczema Society](#) has offered advice on handwashing techniques for people with eczema and other skin conditions.
- [SignHealth](#) has created British Sign Language (BSL) videos to help deaf BSL users either working in charities or receiving support.
- [Carers UK](#) has produced recommendations for carers.
- [Full Fact](#) has generated a fact check page on covid-19 to help dispel any false information.

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The CTA Advice Service

CTA Advice Service: The CTA team are currently working remotely, so to ensure you speak to the right person first time, please email advice@ctauk.org to receive a call back for advice and support. Our advice service operates 10-4pm Monday-Friday.

Advice Service Drop-in: due to the changing nature of the situation, our advice team will be holding a weekly online drop-in where members can join a video call to talk to the team and each other about the latest guidance and ask any questions. You can find a recap of the latest session, along with details of our next call on ctauk.org/blog.
