

'How To' Guide

Coronavirus Guidance for CT Car Schemes

Volunteer Car Schemes 

This guidance will be useful for: community transport operators of all sizes who run car schemes. Trustee boards, Senior Managers, Transport managers.

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General information and guidance for Car Schemes

The COVID-19 crisis is a constantly changing situation, which means that you will 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:

- 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. It is key to make this clear to all stakeholders, particularly volunteer drivers and passengers.
 - Please note that in Wales, all journeys on public transport must still only be taken for an essential journey.
- Undertake new risk assessments – these should detail all the steps that you've taken to reduce/eliminate the likelihood of virus transmission. Use our member resources on this [here](#)
- Update risk documents like registers and assessments
- Ensure that your reporting and escalation systems are responsive and robust
- 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
 - 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
 - staff, volunteers and beneficiaries – they should always be aware of the steps implemented to safeguard them
- Check all insurance coverage is relevant to your altered operation and support volunteer drivers to do the same. We recently hosted an Advice Drop-in session with Ben Harris, from Endsleigh, our CTA Insurance partner, where keeping in touch with your insurers came out as a key theme. Read the recap blog post [here](#)
- 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 funds that have been made available. A curated list of these from CTA is available [here](#).
- 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)

Risk assessments

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

- Older people and those with underlying health issues – given that most car scheme 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 reducing contact, minimizing cash handling and time in the passenger's home, cleaning and PPE
- Drivers – regular monitoring of health and wellbeing, social distance in the office/depot, provision of PPE

CTA has created a COVID-specific Risk Assessment template and a How to Guide for Risk Assessments which can be [accessed on our COVID-19 guidance page here](#). We have made these usually member-only resources open access to help get services back up and running.

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 talk through 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.

Specific Journey Types

Non-Emergency Passenger Transport (NEPT)

There is inherent risk in transporting passengers to a medical appointment, however, there is also risk in that passenger not receiving the medical help required. As this type of journey potentially carries more risk of Covid19 transmission, you may want to complete a risk assessment specific to NEPT and offer drivers and passengers a higher level of PPE cover in the vehicle.

- Make clear to passengers and drivers that there is greater risk involved in NEPT
- Use “Level 1 PPE” to reduce risk of infection. If offering the service on behalf of your local NHS Trust or Health Board, it may be worth asking them to furnish you with the necessary equipment.

Level 1 PPE is comprised of:

- ✓ Single pair of gloves
- ✓ Disposable plastic apron
- ✓ Fluid repellent surgical mask
- ✓ Eye protection, if you feel there is a risk of patient coughing or splash/droplet exposure

Changing and maintaining PPE

PPE should be changed between passengers. Disposable gloves, aprons and masks are single use and should never be re-used or washed. All PPE should be stored in a clean and dry area to prevent surface contamination. Reusable protective face wear should be decontaminated after each use. Any reusable PPE should have a clearly documented cleaning/laundry schedule.

Useful infographics on putting on and taking off PPE can be found using the following links

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879105/PHE_COVID-19_Doffing_gown_version.pdf
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879105/PHE_COVID-19_Doffing_gown_version.pdf

Offering lifts to services like food shopping or prescription pick up

- Before offering the journey, consider if you could bring the item(s) to the service user instead
- If you are concerned with passengers’ emotional wellbeing, a telephone befriending service or an outdoors socially distanced visit could be a good alternative to a shopping trip
- For non-medical journeys, face coverings for both parties may be sufficient, but we would highly recommend a full risk assessment before making a decision. When you are conducting your risk

assessment, review what PPE is necessary for non-medical journeys. A face covering for both driver and passenger may be sufficient, this will depend on your operation.

- Seriously consider journey time, particularly in rural areas where amenities may be far away or in congested city centres. Time spent in the vehicle is a key factor as longer time spans increase the risk of droplets spread. Is there a closer option or a delivery service?

Offering lifts to non-essential services e.g. hairdressers

The Department for Transport have limited Car Sharing to only “essential journeys” at present, whilst Taxi guidance allows for journeys to meet any need. We would highly recommend limiting journeys to those that cannot be avoided and where the service cannot be delivered to the passenger without them travelling.

Recommendations for all Journey Types

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 single-use seat covers to reduce the need to deep clean car interior
- Ensure volunteers have a regular supply of the PPE they need for the kinds of journeys they are providing
- Support volunteer drivers to confirm whether the pandemic has affected their insurance policy.
- 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).

Drivers over 70

Many Car Schemes rely on the generous donation of time and miles from drivers over 70. In the current pandemic however, it may not be safe for older volunteers to do so.

- Evaluate if there's a need to deploy drivers deemed to be at greater risk due to age - bear in mind that some insurance companies have now withheld cover from drivers over 70 for car schemes.
- Considering the extra risk involved in NEPT journeys, you might opt to reserve those for drivers at lower risk
- Discuss with drivers what else they might do to support passengers. For example, they could make weekly phone calls to those passengers who are not yet able to use the car scheme for whatever reason and would appreciate a chat.
- If you do decide that isn't safe for them to continue driving with you, be sure to show your appreciation for their dedication to your service
- We will be creating resources for having difficult conversations like these with volunteers, so keep an eye on our website.

Vehicles

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:

- 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 I seat. Training should be provided to volunteer drivers using their own vehicles on how to safely and effectively clean their vehicle
- In-vehicle shields - there are now a variety of in-car dividers, but before investing, you must check the insurance and MOT implications with the insurer and MOT testing centre. For reference, the Taxi and PHC guidance on shields is included at the end of this document.
- Cleanliness – sanitized wiping of all contact surfaces (seats, handles, grabs, seatbelts, wheelchair handles) between each passenger, and deep cleaning after a day's driving
- Hand sanitiser should be supplied to all volunteers and they must use it each time they leave and re-enter the vehicle, and must ensure that passengers use hand sanitiser before entering the car.
- Ventilation – It is essential that the car is always properly ventilated. The internal air system must be set to circulate and windows should at least be partially open at all times. It is recommended that you inform passengers they may need to be appropriately dressed

- Minimising/eliminating cash handling – this may mean using a credit/account system or adding facilities for receiving contactless card payments.
- Always consider if any changes you have made will impact on accessibility levels, particularly if transporting a passenger who uses a wheelchair without a Passenger Assistant.

Passengers

It is imperative that operations are planned and delivered with the safety of passengers in mind. Here's our advice on keeping passengers safe when resuming services:

- Regularly communicate with passengers, informing them of your organisation's newly implemented measures – this includes what is required of them and that the service will be declined if the passenger (or anyone else in their household) is showing symptoms
 - Make clear which kinds of journey are deemed 'essential' and only agree to provide these. It is also crucial to make these decisions with reference to the journey length.
 - It may be worth keeping a directory of alternatives for those journeys you're unable to provide. Examples include shops that offer delivery, befriending services and pharmacies that make drop offs.
 - Where passengers require assistance, ensure that you understand what this will involve and that drivers agree to provide it. This is particularly relevant to car schemes, as having another member of the household come along to support will increase risk to the driver, and is thus not ideal.
 - For passengers who need a higher degree of physical assistance, the use of a wheelchair to get them from home to the car may be safer, rather than steadying and guiding assistance, as the person is facing away from the driver/assistant and physical contact is limited. This will need to be approached sensitively with the passenger.
 - Remind passengers that ventilation is key, even in bad weather, so warm clothes are recommended.
 - **Passenger Bubbles.** To further minimise the risk of sitting closer than two metres, you should seriously consider a bubble between a single driver and passenger. This is particularly pertinent if you offer NEPT.
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Appendix 1

The latest guidance from the UK and devolved government

In recent weeks, the UK Government has updated its coronavirus guidance to ease certain aspects of the lockdown. The devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have also made changes to their lockdown guidance, which members in those nations should follow. You can always find the most relevant and up to date guidance in the following places:

England

Staying alert and safe (social distancing) until 4 July: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Staying Alert and Safe (Social Distancing) after 4 July: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>

Safer Travel Guidance for Operators – including guidance on conducting risk assessments:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

Safer Travel Guidance for Passengers: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Confederation of Passenger Transport – has a range of guidance material on risk assessments and safe operation of bus services: <http://www.cpt-uk.org/>

DVLA – licence renewals: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dvla-coronavirus-covid-19-update#renewing-a-driving-licence>

Face coverings: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/592/contents/made>

Northern Ireland

Vehicles & Driver Licensing: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-and-motoring>

General Updates on NI Measures: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/executive-daily-update-initiatives-deal-coronavirus-12-june-2020>

General Travel Advice: <https://www.translink.co.uk/covid19update>

Wales

General Travel Advice for Passengers: <https://tfwrail.wales/covid-19> and <https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-coronavirus-guidance-public>

Guidance for Transport Operators: <https://gov.wales/restarting-public-transport-guidance-operators>

Guidance for Employees using vehicles: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>

Scotland

Guidance for Transport Operators: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/guidance-for-transport-operators/#>

Advice on How to Travel Safely: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/advice-on-how-to-travel-safely/>

Appendix 2

Taxi and PHC Guidance on Shields

This guidance is taken from Scottish Government Guidance for Taxis and PHCs. It is not an exhaustive list, nor is it specific to CT. It is useful however as a list of considerations when fitting screens.

If an operator decides to fit a protective screen to the licensed car, the operator must contact their local licensing authority to advise that he/she has plans to do this. There must be proof that the relevant insurer has been contacted and that the insurer has confirmed that the necessary insurance would be unaffected by the proposed installation of the screen. The licensing authority may consider this to be a material change to the vehicle of which they require to be notified formally in terms of Paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 to the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. If formal notification is required, a fee may have to be paid to the licensing authority to process the notification, which would also involve consultation with Police Scotland regarding the proposed change(s) to the vehicle. In any event, if a screen is fitted, the operator must ensure that it is fitted safely and securely. In addition, it:

- Must comply with the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations.
- Must not be permanently installed in the vehicle
- Must be fitted in such a way to not affect the structural integrity of the vehicle, or interfere with any manufacturer fitted safety equipment e.g. airbags
- Must not wrap around the driver seat and create a partition between the two front seats, in addition to the rear cabin area.
- The partition used **MUST** be clear and transparent and can **ONLY** be fitted across the rear of both front seats, creating a partition between the front and rear cabin area of the vehicle
- Any screen must be tested to the relevant EU standard for an original equipment type approval test covering interior fittings
- The screen must be approved by MIRA or other comparable independent product engineering, testing, consultancy and certification organisation.
- Screens should be constructed of PETg or polycarbonate
- The screen should not impede the driver's vision, movement, or communication with passengers
- The screen should not impede driver or passenger access or egress to the vehicle