

16 July 2020

Dear Patient

**Re: Guidance note for patients requesting exemption letters**

We are aware that some patients might be understandably anxious about the Government's announcements around the use of face coverings in various public settings. Wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets in England will also become mandatory from 24 July.

GPs are unfortunately **not** in a position to provide individual risk assessments or letters for patients who feel that they should be exempt from wearing a face covering.

Gateshead & South Tyneside Local Medical Committee has therefore prepared this guidance note as the statutory body that advises and supports all GPs and practice teams across the area.

**The government guidance on exemptions suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption; therefore, it is sufficient for an individual to self-declare this.**

The responsibility for issuing exemptions for those travelling on public transport lies with the transport provider not your GP. Similarly, practices are under no obligation to provide letters of support for anyone who does not fall under the list of exemptions but considers themselves to have another reason to be exempted.

Government advice on the use of face coverings can be found here:

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

Some people [don't have to wear a face covering](#) including for health, age or equality reasons. Some transport staff may not wear a face covering if it is not required for their job.

We hope that this guidance provides some reassurance for you on this issue.

Yours sincerely



**Dr W D Westwood**  
**Honorary Secretary**