

**20 July 2020**

### **Guidance note for patients requesting exemption letters for wearing face masks**

Dear Patients,

We are aware that some of you might be understandably anxious about the Government's recent announcements around the use of face masks in various public settings.

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 mask, whether in regard to their use on public transport or in any other setting as required by legislation.

Devon Local Medical Committee has therefore prepared this guidance note as the statutory body that advises and supports all GPs and practice teams across Devon.

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.

In the case of face mask use on public transport, the responsibility for issuing exemptions 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 them to have another reason to be exempted.

Government advice on the use of face coverings on public transport 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 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.

### **School Attendance from September 2020 - 'Medical Statements of Concern'**

Devon LMC is aware that some parents are contacting their GP to request a 'Medical Statement of Concern' either because of a child's underlying health issues or because they do not agree with the planned return timetable in September 2020.

In the absence of any significant changes, school and college attendance will again be mandatory from the new academic year. Shielding advice will be on pause from 1st August, which means that the small number of children who will remain on the 'Shielded List' can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

GPs are unfortunately not in a position to provide individual risk assessments or letters for a child; parents should be advised to contact the school to discuss their concerns and to hear the measures they are putting in place to mitigate risks in line with government guidance.