



Scottish Government Face Covering Exemption Cards

Face coverings are an important non-pharmaceutical intervention and bring a benefit in reducing transmission of Covid-19 as they provide a barrier to protect the wearer from droplet and aerosols and they provide protection to those around the wearer should the wearer be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. As such, we have made face coverings mandatory in a large range of indoor public places, indoor communal workplaces, shops and on public transport, where we know the risks are highest.

In developing our policy on face coverings we were aware that there would be circumstances where a person would be unable to, or it would be inappropriate, for them to wear a face covering and as such there are exemptions within the regulations and guidance. Our exemption policy, which was developed in consultation with Disabled People's Organisations, promotes understanding and kindness.

However, despite guidance reinforced by public health messaging, we are aware through discussions with third sector stakeholders and the media of reports of incidences of hate crime and of people being denied access to shops and essential services and products when not wearing a face covering.

The Scottish Government exemption card will be accessible from **Thursday 29 October** for people who are exempt from wearing face coverings. The purpose of this card is to support people to feel more confident and safe when accessing public spaces and using public services.

The service will be delivered by Disability Equality Scotland (DES) on behalf of the Scottish Government and physical and digital cards are available to request online at www.exempt.scot or via a free helpline on **0800 121 6240**.

The face covering exemption card has been developed in close consultation with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), equality, carers, age, mental health and learning disability, and asthma and lung stakeholders.

This exemption card, which is available upon request, is distinct from the UK Government exemption card which can simply be downloaded from the gov.uk website. The Scottish Government recognises that other forms of exemption cards exist and are valid.

The exemption card will also be accompanied by a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the tool and the need for an understanding and compassionate approach to face coverings and their use in society.

It is important to remember that it is only the minority of people who are exempt from wearing a face covering and we should all continue to follow the FACTS for a safer Scotland in order to reduce transmission of Covid-19 and protect ourselves, each other and the NHS.

For the current guidance on wearing face coverings in Scotland visit the Scottish Government [website](#).