

Questions to Transport Advisory Board – 23 September 2020

1. How are operators instructing drivers/conductors to prioritise who can board public transport at busy times given the reduction in capacity? **Cllr Cusworth**

Response

Customers who choose to travel should do everything possible to maintain social distancing where possible. If a train is already busy when it arrives at a station, and there is nowhere to sit safely, customers should wait for the next service. Northern understands this may be frustrating, however social distancing restrictions means we are still currently running services with a significant reduction in capacity.

Northern Railway

On our buses we are operating at a reduced capacity with around half of the seats being available. It is therefore possible that that you might see 'Bus Full' signs as some services reach their revised capacity more quickly.

If you are waiting at a bus stop and the bus drives past, it might have reached its reduced seating capacity. If the bus does stop, but is near capacity, the driver will only allow one person to board for every person that gets off, so you may need to allow extra time for your journey and be prepared to wait. With the latest version of the First Bus App you can now track your bus live on a map and it also displays how many seats are available on each bus.

First

2. What support are drivers/conductors receiving in handling difficult passengers or passengers requiring additional support? **Cllr Cusworth**

Response

Rail staff engage and educate customers about the mandatory use of face coverings when they travel by train and encourage people to wear them. The vast majority of people do the right thing and help protect others by bringing and wearing a face covering while in stations and on trains. Unless they have a good reason, those that don't wear a face covering could receive a fine from the British Transport Police.

Northern Railway

The majority of our passengers are wearing face coverings and we estimate that around 15% are exempt. Our drivers are now issuing notices to any passengers without a face covering who are not exempt, to remind them of the law and tell them they may be liable to be fined. Ultimately it is the passenger's responsibility and drivers cannot enforce this. Please also bear in mind that some passengers are exempt from the requirement to wear one and the reasons for some exemptions may not be immediately obvious.

Drivers cannot enforce the law around face coverings, but they will issue a special ticket to passengers who are not exempt, advising it is the customer's responsibility to comply with the law. We are talking to local police who have the power to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £100 for those who refuse.

First Group

3. What training have the drivers had regarding the wearing by passengers of the Sunflower Lanyard which is designed to highlight that the passenger has a blind disability and so should not be required/asked why they are not wearing a mask.

Cllr McNeely

Response

Here at Northern we have briefed our staff to recognise the Sunflower Lanyard scheme, understand its meaning and offer help, where appropriate, if they see someone wearing one.

Northern Railway

If you are unable to wear a face covering because of an exemption, please be prepared to inform the driver or show a journey assistance card. The Journey assistance card scheme has been updated to enable passengers who are exempt to obtain, print or show on their phone, an Extra help to travel card (Journey assistance card).

First Group

4. What are the budget consequences of Covid? **Cllr Mallinder**

Response

The cost of Covid is extensive, because revenue is down and costs are up, but the budget for maintenance and customer service remains unchanged. Long-term things may change, but that is no different to any other organisation in the UK, and we will communicate any future changes to all stakeholders.

Richard Isaac
Regional Community and Sustainability Manager
Northern

Further information from Northern Railway on how services have been impacted by Covid-19 can be found [here](#).

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