

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

Response – Local bus services are still operating with a lot of the same guidance and legislation but with reduced capacity. This means that some groups, such as wheelchair users, may be given priority but as before the current situation passengers are carried in the order they board. However where we have large school movements that would impact on other passengers we are providing additional dedicated school and college buses although we cannot force school children to use the school buses or stop them from using local service buses. Some issues have arisen in September that we could not have foreseen and additional local buses (duplicates) and extra school journeys have been provided.

Additional school buses have been provided for Wath and St Pius in your local(ish) area and since September an additional school service has been provided for De Warrene Academy from the Mexborough and Denaby areas.

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

Response – Local bus operators provide their staff with on-going training and Covid specific processes/actions are in place for staff. With Stagecoach being the predominant operator in your area details of their advice for customers that in turn helps staff can be found here <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/covid-19-travelling-safely> .

3. **Cllr McNeely** - 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.

Response – Public Transport use in South Yorkshire for those with a disability, including a sight impairment, is planned carefully and with the support of local groups such as Rotherham Sight and Sound and Sheffield Royal Society for the blind. We issue specific pass and covers for those with a sight disability as many groups and organisations use their own way of highlighting if someone has a disability that would make it unsuitable for public transport providers. If you have a health condition which means you're unable to wear a face covering, you'll need to let staff on board know and to make it easier for some passengers, you can download our journey assistance cards, and then show the face covering exemption card when you travel.

There is no blanket exemption for anyone with a vision impairment. The government has clarified that the exemption could apply to people who have “a restricted field of vision, particularly if any residual vision is at the lower edge of the normal field of view”.

A video produced by the Sight Loss Councils in which one of their vision impaired members explains how to put on and take off a face covering correctly. Any constituents that are interested can find the video here <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/blog/covid-19-guidance-how-to-put-on-and-remove-a-mask-safely-when-you-are-blind-or-partially-sighted> . We would also advise seeking advice from Rotherham Sight and Sound or any number of other organisations or support groups that may be able to provide further advice.

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

Response – Covid 19 is significantly affecting the public transport providers but funding from SYPTE and the DfT has been maintained to keep businesses afloat. SYPTE has secured additional funding from the Department for Transport and Department for Education to deliver additional services, including school bus services, local buses and the tram network. Patronage is significantly down and is recovering but the longer term implications of reduced patronage are not yet known or how central government intend to transition from the current funding arrangements to the new normal. Implications on SYPTE's budgets will be covered in various strategic level meetings. Any questions relating to SYPTE budgets from ward councillors should be directed to communications@sypte.co.uk .