

Passengers urged to consider travel options as transport gets busier

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Public transport use is gradually increasing as people across Greater Manchester start to return to education and employment.

More passengers are starting to use bus, tram and rail services, particularly at peak morning and evening periods, although figures are still much lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Car journeys and active travel modes have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, meaning a higher percentage of people are walking, cycling and using their vehicles compared to public transport.

As more people return to services, Transport for Greater Manchester and operators are working hard to ensure everyone can travel safely, while passengers are being reminded of the part they can play to help limit the spread of the virus.

The Greater Manchester **TravelSafe Partnership** has held and will continue to hold days of action, reminding passengers that, if you're not exempt and don't wear a face covering, transport staff or police could stop you from boarding or can ask you to leave a service. You could also be fined £100.

However, unlike the wearing of face coverings, which can be enforced, [Department for Transport \(DfT\) guidance](#) states that there are actions that people can take to mitigate when social distancing of at least one metre is not possible on public transport:

- Wear a face covering, unless exempt
- Sanitise your hands before and after your journey and limit cash handling by using contactless, smart tickets or apps
- Wait for the next service if you feel you cannot safely distance from others, be prepared to queue or take a different entrance or exit at stations
- Avoid consuming food or drink and touch as few surfaces as possible
- Travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow

Customers are also being asked to plan ahead and consider travelling outside the peak periods if possible when [services may be less busy](#).

In response, TfGM is working with operators to run as many services as possible and ensuring enhanced cleaning programmes are in place to keep vehicles, stops and stations clean. Metrolink is using all vehicles available to operate two in every three trams as 'doubles', while more than £2m in funding has been secured to run almost 300 additional bus trips a day, to support pupils returning to school.

Hand sanitiser dispensers have also been installed and face coverings made available at interchanges, information has been provided across the entire network advising people of the latest advice and guidance and work is continuing with schools and businesses to promote flexible travelling schemes and safer travel.

Transport for Greater Manchester Customer Director, Stephen Rhodes, said: "Although still nowhere near the normal levels, the demand on our services is starting to increase and we have worked hard and introduced lots of measures to make sure the transport network is as safe, clean and reliable as possible.

"We would still urge people to cycle or walk to school, college or work if you can, and if using public transport to plan ahead and try to avoid peak hours at the start and end of each day to keep the load on roads and public transport down.

"It's also vital that those who use the transport networks remember to follow the basic rules – wash your hands, wear a face covering, use contactless payment and try to maintain a distance of one metre wherever possible.

"We know that this is not always possible, particular as the peak periods start to get busier, which is why we are working with operators to run as many services as possible and ensuring vehicles, stops and stations are cleaned regularly.

"With infection rates across Greater Manchester rising and all but essential travel advised in Oldham and Bolton, these simple measures can have a big impact – so let's work together to stop the spread."

Photo credit: Transport for Greater Manchester

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