

# Peak time restrictions on free travel passes to be reinstated as more people return to work and school

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Peak time restrictions on concessionary tram, train and bus passes are to be reinstated by Transport for West Midlands from Monday, 1st June to provide more space for people returning to work and school as lockdown restrictions are eased.

Morning rush hour restrictions for English National Concessionary Pass holders were removed in mid-March to make it easier for the region's older citizens and disabled people to take advantage of early shopping sessions at supermarkets.

But with some children due to begin a phased return to school on Monday (June 1) and many people already returning to work, the region's transport bosses are expecting demand for buses, trams and trains to rise – especially during the early morning.

Due to social distancing guidelines capacity on public transport is very much reduced – down to about a quarter of pre-lockdown levels – and so commuters are strongly urged to cycle, walk or drive to work and avoid public transport unless they have absolutely no alternative.

Laura Shoaf, managing director of TfWM, said: "We have kept public transport running throughout lockdown to ensure essential workers, such as NHS hospital workers and supermarket staff could get to work.

“And while demand for bus and tram services was very low and supermarkets were opening early for older people we were able to temporarily lift those restrictions on concessionary travel passes to help those people get their essential supplies during lockdown.

“Now the lockdown restrictions are being eased those limited spaces on our buses, trains and trams are needed for school children and working people so the peak time restriction will be reinstated from Monday.

“Along with our partners we are doing all we can to keep the network safe, including extra cleaning of heavy touch areas on transport and extra guidance for passengers. Although there are more services running, the message remains to only use public transport where there is no alternative.”

The following advice has also been issued to passengers:

- Stay apart and wear a protective face covering
- Do not crowd at doorways to get on board and leave space for people to exit
- Do not sit next to others unless you’re travelling with people from your household
- Use mobile, smartcard or contactless payments
- Allow extra time in case you can’t get on the first service that arrives
- When you arrive at stops or stations check for any changes to the way to you need to enter or exit

Other advice includes catching any coughs or sneezes and washing hands regularly or using hand sanitiser.

*Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands*