

# SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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## Guidance note for patients requesting exemption letters regarding face masks

We are aware that some patients might be understandably anxious about the Government's recent announcements around the use of face masks in various public settings.

GPs are unfortunately **not** in a position to provide individual risk assessments or letters for patients who feel that they should be exempt from wearing a face mask.

**The government guidance on exemptions suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption therefore it is sufficient for an individual to self-declare this.**

The responsibility for issuing exemptions lies with the transport provider not your GP. Similarly, practices are under no obligation to provide letters of support for anyone who does not fall under the list of exemptions but considers them to have another reason to be exempted.

Government advice on the use of face coverings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings>

Some people don't have to wear a face covering including for health, age or equality reasons. Some transport staff may not wear a face covering if it is not required for their job.

## Who is 'clinically extremely vulnerable'?

Clinically extremely vulnerable people include the following:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy.
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy.
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment.
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer.
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system,
  - such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or
  - who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.

3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary (COPD).
4. People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

We hope that this guidance provides some reassurance for you on this issue.