

# Coronavirus Travel Advice



## For Employers and Staff – 15 May 2020

Coronavirus has affected all aspects of our lives, including how we travel. Following government announcements earlier this week, national guidance and advice for transport operators and passengers has been published about using public transport safely.

Travel and transport are central to Greater Manchester's recovery and many people rely on public transport for work and education. Government guidance on social distancing means that public transport capacity is significantly constrained nationally and especially in city-regions such as Greater Manchester. TfGM is continuing to work closely with bus, rail and tram operators to safely restart public transport and with businesses, organisations and staff representatives, councils and others to support Greater Manchester's recovery and to Build Back Better.

### Current Travel Advice

- Work from home, but if you cannot you can travel to your workplace.
- If you need to travel, walk, cycle or drive if you can.
- Protect public transport for those with no alternative – do not use it unless you have to.
- If you have to use public transport wear a face covering, keep your distance from other passengers, clean your hands frequently and use contactless payment if possible.

### Travel from 11 May Onwards

Over the past six weeks, in accordance with Stay at Home advice, the number of journeys taken in Greater Manchester has reduced significantly, with journey on buses dropping 85%, Metrolink 95% and rail 97%.

Following government advice for sectors to return to work where work cannot be done remotely, there has been a modest increase in the number of people travelling.

Greater Manchester's business and political leaders are continuing to seek funding from central government to increase public transport services soon as possible in June in line with government post-lockdown phasing.

However, because of social distancing, the transport network will work very differently in the coming weeks and months. Operators are currently seeking government funding to run more services but capacity on all services will be severely constrained to between 10-20% of pre-coronavirus levels. At maximum capacity under social distancing a tram could hold 20 people, a double decker bus 15 people and a train carriage 30 people.

This is a significant challenge for Greater Manchester and one that will require all organisations, employers and employees to work together to address and to ensure that public transport capacity is kept for those who have no other option to travel to work. This means that reducing the number of people travelling at peak times – and supporting those who can to work from home – will be essential.

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### Alternatives to Public Transport

The government's advice is for people avoid public transport and to cycle, walk or drive where possible. Increasing walking and cycling will be essential to reducing pressure on our roads and public transport.

Greater Manchester is investing £5m to fund a Safe Streets, Save Lives campaign so that local authorities can introduce measures to make walking and cycling safer, such as widening pavements and temporary cycle lanes. The government has also announced £250m for immediate walking and cycling measures, as part of a £2bn long-term fund.

TfGM can help businesses by providing information and support for people new to, or returning to cycling – including journey planning, where to buy a bike, training and maintenance. Find out more at **[tfgm.com/coronavirus](https://tfgm.com/coronavirus)**

### Issues to consider

Many employers are conducting risk assessments on returning to work and safe travel will be an essential part of these considerations. Employers will need to consider the following issues to protect public transport for those who have no choice, including

- Helping to reduce the number of journeys taken in GM by supporting employees to continue work from home
- Asking employees to avoid using public transport unless they have no other option.
- Enable staff to travel outside of peak times and to maximise the capacity we have across our transport networks.
- Supporting employees who want to walk and cycle to work if they can and take steps to make this as easy and accessible as possible including cycle parking or the government's Cycle to Work scheme, which provides bikes and equipment to employees as a tax-free benefit.
- Highlight to employees driving to work that there may be more people cycling, road closures and temporary walking and cycling schemes in place – so they should allow extra time for trips and be careful on the roads.

TfGM can provide advice and guidance about cycling and walking and how flexible working may benefit your business. TfGM can also provide advice and support to business networks as required To find out more visit **[tfgm.com/workingdifferently](https://tfgm.com/workingdifferently)** or contact **[Sustainable.Journeys@tfgm.com](mailto:Sustainable.Journeys@tfgm.com)**.

For travel advice, journey planning and information about coronavirus please visit **[tfgm.com/coronavirus](https://tfgm.com/coronavirus)** or call **0161 244 1000**.

The Growth Company's Business Growth Hub can also provide specialist support, including help with the latest government guidance. Contact **[BGH@growthco.uk](mailto:BGH@growthco.uk)** or call **0161 359 3050**.

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