

To all practices in Surrey and Sussex LMCs

16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Colleagues

**1. Request for certification or letters in relation to wearing face masks.**

As the Government extends its advice on the number of venues where face masks should be worn, the LMC has received enquires from practices that patients are requesting 'letters of exemption' from their General Practitioners.

**There is no requirement for evidence of exemption, it is sufficient for an individual to self-declare this, and there is no requirement for General Practitioners to provide such letters**

Patients should be advised to visit the Government website, as below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#exemptions-to-wearing-a-face-covering-where-they-are-mandated>

Within this site is a list of exemption; as below: -

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a legitimate reason not to. This includes:

- young children under the age of 11
- not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others
- to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you
- to eat or drink, but only if you need to
- to take medication
- if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering

There are also scenarios when you are permitted to remove a face covering when asked:

- If asked to do so by shop staff for the purpose of age identification
- If speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication

Local Medical Committees for  
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Surrey KT22 8BB    [www.sslmcs.co.uk](http://www.sslmcs.co.uk)

The LMC does not recommend practices provide exemption certificates or letters for patients in support of a perceived exemption and patients should be advised this and diverted to either the Government Website or their travel company's website.

The LMC is aware that Transport for London (TFL) have a specific website/phone line for customers whilst travelling on TFL; this is available at: <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/face-coverings>

South-eastern railways also have a similar facility at:  
<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/help-and-contact/get-in-touch/coronavirus-travel-advice>

## **2. Certification in relation to Covid19 isolation or absence from the workplace.**

Those patients who are shielding and on the shielding list, which as described in my earlier letter to practices about shielding (13<sup>th</sup> July) is continuing after 1<sup>st</sup> August, even though the shielding advice is being paused from that date, will have received a letter from the Government, this can be shown to employers as evidence and no GP certification is required.

If patients need to self-isolate because they or someone in their household have Covid19 symptoms, they can obtain a certificate from NHS111. If a patient doesn't have an email, this certificate can be sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. This site is available at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/isolation-note/terms/>

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Julius Parker  
Chief Executive