

# NCT Safer Travel Guidance for Customers

**Version 5, 28 September 2020**

The Department for Transport (DfT) published Safer Travel Guidance for Passengers on 12 May 2020, which we are following in full. We are committed to revising this guidance as changes are made by DfT, with the latest update effective from 28 September 2020.

You can view the full guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers> which applies to all passengers – adults and children.

An easy read Safer Travel Guide for Passengers guide is [available here](#).

## What's Changed?

- 28 September 2020 - Updated to reflect Social Contact rules and other government amendments. Revisions to some sections to simplify the guidance. Addition of further suggested ways to show facial covering exemption by customers. Addition of guidance for visiting the Travel Centre.
- 17 July 2020 - Updated to reflect the Prime Minister's announcement on using public transport
- 4 July 2020 - Updated to reflect changes to social distancing measures and guidance for people with sight loss
- 15 June 2020 - Updated to reflect mandatory requirement to wear facial coverings; addition of Capacity Checker and new Journey Assistance cards

## Introduction

NCT buses are clean, safe and good to go and we have achieved Visit Britain's official industry standard, which confirms that we are following industry and Government guidance on COVID-19, social distancing and cleanliness.

This new standard is a sign of businesses being able to demonstrate that they're adhering to the COVID-19 guidance issued by the government for their sector, have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and that they have the required processes in place. Read more [here](#).

This Safer Travel Guidance is in place to help you travel safely on our buses.

Our services are available for all types of journey, but **you MUST NOT travel on our buses if you:**

- are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household or support bubble with somebody with symptoms
- are clinically extremely vulnerable and live in an area where additional public health measures mean you have been advised to resume shielding
- have been told by the NHS Test and Trace service to self-isolate

You should maintain a 2 metre social distance where possible, because the risk of transmission is small at this distance. If you cannot keep a 2 metre distance, reduce the risk to yourself and others by maintaining a 1m metre distance, where possible, and taking suitable precautions.

**There are situations where this may not be possible, for example when boarding or alighting, on busier services, at busier times of day, when walking through bus stations and interchanges.**



## Social Distancing

Help keep yourself, other passengers and our staff safe by taking the following precautions:

- limit the number of people or households that you come into contact with, for example by avoiding the busiest routes, as well as busy times like the rush hour
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly
- use a face covering on public transport
- avoid touching your face
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow
- touch as few surfaces as possible
- minimise the time spent close to other people, where possible
- avoid loud talking, shouting or singing
- dispose of waste safely, including items such as used disposable face coverings

## Social Contact Rules

You must observe social contact rules and you must not travel in groups of more than 6 people unless you are:

- all from the same household or support bubble
- travelling while undertaking an activity that is [exempt under the rules](#)

When travelling as a group, you should sit together.

## Planning Your Journey

Before and during your journey, check for the latest travel advice or information:

- [NCTX Buses app](#)
- [NCT Website](#)
- [NCT Twitter](#)
- [NCT Facebook](#)
- [Sign up for e-mail news alerts and information](#)

Your journey may take longer than normal due to reduced capacity and social distancing measures and you must allow sufficient time if your journey involves changing buses or on to different forms of transport.

We are closely monitoring usage and there is sufficient capacity for current levels of demand at all times of day, including last buses.

[Use our Capacity Checker to see how quiet or busy your bus may be](#), which is available on the NCTX Buses app and our website.

You are encouraged to wait for the next service if you feel you cannot keep your distance from other people.

In the highly unlikely event that you are unable to board the last bus because it is full, we will cover the reasonable cost of any alternative travel you have to make and look at increasing capacity, if needed.

You may consider getting on or off the bus at the previous or next stop, if it is quieter.

## Facial Coverings

**The government has made it mandatory for passengers to wear a facial covering on public transport.**

If you do not wear a face covering you will be breaking the law and could be fined.

### What is a facial covering?

**You are responsible for sourcing a facial covering** and [advice on how to make a facial covering is available here](#).

A facial covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth. It is important to wash or sanitise your hands before and after touching your face covering. Remember to safely dispose of your facial covering in a litter bin if it is a single use and to regularly wash your facial covering if it is reusable.

Face coverings are not a substitute for maintaining social distancing and good hand hygiene.

### Who is exempt from wearing a facial covering?

There are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances, noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings, and that the reasons for this may not be visible to others.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England does not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others – including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public
- people who need to take their medication

You may be asked to remove your facial covering if asked to do so by a police officer or other relevant person.

The wearing of a facial covering remains optional for bus drivers when in their enclosed cab, which provides a physical barrier between customers and drivers. We've also covered the ventilation holes in these screens for enhanced protection. Unless covered by the exemption list, all NCT employees who are travelling as a passenger will have to wear a facial covering.

## If I am exempt, how do I let the driver know?

If you are exempt, please let the driver know by:

- Saying you are exempt as you board (you do not have to say why)
- Showing a [Journey Assistance Cards](#) which you can download and print at home or [email us](#) and ask for them to be posted to you
- Showing a [government issued exemption card](#) (phone or printed)
- Wearing a [Sunflower Lanyard](#)
- Using your mobility or disabled bus pass, which registers on the ticket machine and the driver can see you are exempt

## Boarding the Bus

When waiting at the bus stop, keep 2 metres away from other people, **where possible**.

Wait for people to get off the bus before you board and only board the bus one at a time.

Cashless payment methods are preferred - [contactless](#), [NCTX Buses app](#), [Easyrider](#) or [Robin Hood](#).

**Our exact fare cash payment method means you can still pay with cash. This applies to all NCT routes, including those where drivers normally give change and customers on the 1, 26 and 49 will need to pay with the correct money only.**

Have your fare, pass, contactless card or device, ticket or app ready when the bus arrives to minimise the time taken to board. Activate your NCTX Buses app ticket when the bus is in sight.

All of our buses have a hand sanitiser dispenser fitted near the entrance for you to use before taking your seat.

## **Where to Sit and During Your Journey**

We have removed some seats from use to assist with social distancing, which is those where customers would face each other.

**It is your responsibility** to keep a safe distance from other people. When you can, you should:

- Sit in the window seat only and away from other people (except other members of your own household or support bubble)
- Travel side by side or behind other people, not facing them.
- Make use of the upper deck, where there is one

**There are situations where this may not be possible, for example on busier services and at busier times of day. It is for these reasons that the government has mandated that you wear a facial covering.**

**Help keep yourself, our employees and other customers safe by:**

- respecting other people's space while travelling
- avoiding consuming food and drink on board
- being aware of pregnant, older and disabled people who may require a seat or extra space

- being aware that some individuals may have hidden disabilities
- opening windows to allow a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through the bus
- avoiding loud talking, shouting or singing
- disposing of waste safely, including items such as used disposable face coverings
- being aware of the surfaces you touch and not touching your face
- covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, please alert the driver. In the case of an emergency, contact the emergency services as you normally would.

If you need help, maintain a short distance from members of staff, where possible. If this isn't possible, you should try to avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend near staff as short as possible.

## Guidance for people travelling with a wheelchair or pushchair

Our buses remain available for people travelling with a wheelchair or pushchair and the usual guidelines still apply:

- [Wheelchair Guidance](#)
- [Pushchair Guidance](#)

There may be reduced capacity for pushchairs due to social distancing measures.

Our drivers will continue to deploy the ramp when required, but customers should wait **at least 2m away from the door**, to allow the driver to deploy the ramp and maintain social distance.

When getting off the bus, please press the bell and wait in the bay until the driver has deployed the ramp and then moved away from the bus, to give you social distance.

## Guidance for people with sight loss

Our buses remain available for people with sight loss and the usual guidelines still apply, which are available [here](#).

When presenting your concessionary card or paying for your journey, our drivers will not be able to touch your card or cash. Ask them to guide you to the reader or coin slot.

All priority seats remain available, but some seats elsewhere on the bus are not available to allow for social distancing. This includes the sideways facing seats on all buses and the seat immediately behind the entrance doors on double decks used on most routes. If you need assistance finding an available seat, please ask the driver.

When alighting, please press the bell in good time and remain in your seat until the bus has stopped.

## **Treat our Staff with Respect**

All of our employees are key workers, ensuring that people who have to make journeys by public transport can do so, but they are not responsible for the enforcement of social distancing.

We are doing everything we can to protect them and you by providing them with face coverings, gloves, sanitiser, disinfectant wipes and reminding them to follow the guidelines on washing their hands and keep their distance, when they can.

Our drivers have worked behind screens for several years, which provides a physical barrier and we've also covered the ventilation holes in these screens for enhanced protection.

Please treat all of our employees with respect and follow the instructions they may give you and follow signage on the bus, which is in place for the safety of everyone.

## **Getting off the Bus**

When getting off the bus, press the bell in good time and remain in your seat until the bus stops.

On the floor of our buses, there is a red circle where you should wait until the doors are opened. Once the doors are open, make use of the hand sanitiser near the doors and leave the bus as quickly as you can.

When getting off the bus, customers who travel in a wheelchair should press the bell and wait in the bay until the driver has deployed the ramp and then moved away from the bus, to give you social distance.



Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands as soon as possible, including for children.

## What are NCT Doing?

Throughout the coronavirus outbreak, we have always followed government advice for the transport sector at all times, for both our customers and employees, and we will continue to respond to changes in guidance.

NCT has achieved Visit Britain's official industry standard, which confirms that we are following industry and Government guidance on COVID-19, social distancing and cleanliness.

This new standard is a sign of businesses being able to demonstrate that they're adhering to the COVID-19 guidance issued by the government for their sector, have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and that they have the required processes in place.

We're taking our responsibility seriously and NCT is operating a full timetable, providing maximum capacity for people to distance. We will also continue to:

- review and implement government advice and guidance
- communicate regularly with our customers
- provide our [Capacity Checker](#) on the NCT website and NCTX Buses app, where customers can see how quiet or busy their bus is
- display the [Safer Travel Guidance](#) on buses, at stops and online, with printed signage on buses and regularly changing audio announcements, reminding customers about the requirements
- rigorously clean our buses, paying additional attention to the parts of buses that are most commonly touched, such as doors, poles, bells, card readers.
- provide our employees with access to cleaning wipes, gloves, facial coverings and hand sanitiser
- close off some seats on buses to support social distancing
- reinforce messages to our employees about the expectations and requirements on them on the bus and when at work
- monitor usage and loadings per journey and look at ways we can provide additional capacity, where resources allow
- enforce that where any employees who show any symptoms or are living with someone who has symptoms that they self-isolate and do not return to work until they provide a negative test result

- installed hand sanitisers to all of our buses for customers to use as they board and alight
- regularly communicate with our employees and recognised trade union, Unite

## Travel Centre:

The NCT Travel Centre is open, with measures in place to ensure it is a COVID secure environment for customers and our staff. We have enhanced cleaning and are wiping down our equipment between customers and staff. All employees working within the Travel Centre, who come in to close contact with customers, are wearing facial visors.

Top up your Easyrider smart card by calling 0115 950 60 70 or top up / purchase a new card [online](#), allowing up to 3 working days for the travel to reach your card.

When visiting:

- The number of customers allowed inside the Travel Centre is limited to 8 at any one time and you may have to queue outside before entering
- You must wear a facial covering inside the Travel Centre, unless you are exempt (see above)
- Make use of the hand sanitiser as you enter and leave
- Follow the directional arrows within the Travel Centre and guidance from our employees
- Payment using a debit or credit card is preferred
- You may be asked to remove your facial covering for the purpose of issuing a new Easyrider card or for proof of identification

## Further Information:

Contact us by emailing [travelcentre@nctx.co.uk](mailto:travelcentre@nctx.co.uk) or calling 0115 950 60 70

## Previous Versions

- You can download Version 1 of this guidance [here](#).
- You can download Version 2 of this guidance [here](#)
- You can download Version 3 of this guidance [here](#).
- You can download Version 4 of this guidance [here](#).