



Your ref: P-05-998
Our ref: KS/04826/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
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14 August 2020

Thank you for your letter of 27 July on behalf of the Petitions committee regarding the wearing of face masks / coverings to be made mandatory in shops.

The position on whether to make face masks mandatory is under continuous review. The First Minister covered this in his Facebook live session this week – reported on BBC here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-53734928>

The evidence remains clear that the most effective way to protect yourself and others from infection is to follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face, and wash your hands regularly. There is evidence to suggest that the wearing of face coverings gives people a false sense of security which makes them less careful about social distancing and handwashing.

It should be noted that it is compulsory to wear a face covering on public transport in Wales if you are aged 11 or over, aside from some exceptions which mean the requirement would not apply. The requirement is part of a wide range of restrictions and requirements that seek to contain the spread of the virus, however, we will make them mandatory in other places if coronavirus starts to spread in Wales again.

The main justification for wearing face coverings on public transport is that there is less scope in buses, trains, aeroplanes and taxis for taking other steps to minimise the risk of exposure to coronavirus.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

On public transport passengers are generally confined to a seat for the duration of the journey and movement away from other passengers is often not possible. Please see the attached guidance. <https://gov.wales/requirement-wear-face-covering-public-transport-wales>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales