

Wales Council of the Blind

R.E.S.E.T.

Transport and Travel

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It's not too late to vaccinate!

Some of us have been reluctant to get the COVID vaccine because of concerns around leaving the house and traveling to the appointment. We may even have been worried about the safety of the vaccine itself. As more people are getting vaccinated (64% of adults in Wales so far) it is becoming safer to be out and about. So, if you've changed your mind but feel you've lost your place in the queue, don't worry! You can get a new appointment by **calling your own GP practice**.

You should still follow the guidance on social distancing and hygiene when travelling to your appointment, but rest assured that the vaccination centres are kept to the highest levels of cleanliness and social distancing is controlled throughout. Remember! It's still your choice to have the vaccine or not, but don't let your worries about leaving the house stop you having it.

Updates on COVID regulations.

Welsh government has issued the following regulations (source [wales.gov](https://www.wales.gov))

What you must do:

From 12 April you must:

- follow social distancing rules with people you don't live with or who are not in your support bubble;
- wear a face covering (if you are able to) in all indoor public places;
- not create an extended household (some people may be able to form a support bubble with one other household);
- meet only the people you live with or your support bubble indoors;
- limit the number of people you meet socially (a maximum of 6 people from 2 households can meet outdoors including in private gardens);
- not travel internationally without reasonable excuse.

What can open:

- schools, colleges and childcare providers (informal childcare should be essential only);
- higher education institutions (mix of in-person and remote learning);
- places of worship;
- community centres - limited opening (for example, for essential public services);
- crematoriums;
- playgrounds and public parks;
- weddings, in venues that are allowed to be open, and funerals (ceremony limit set by venue);
- wedding venue viewings for prospective clients;
- outdoor sports courts and courses;

- close contact services (such as hair salons, beauty salons and tattoo shops);
- all retail;
- libraries;
- some outdoor visitor attractions;
- self-contained accommodation;
- organised outdoor activities for the development and wellbeing of children.

What must be closed:

- venues for events and conferences;
- theatres and concert halls;
- indoor and the majority of outdoor visitor attractions;
- entertainment venue;
- wedding reception or wake;
- indoor leisure and fitness facilities;
- hospitality (except for takeaway and delivery);
- licensed premises, takeaway and delivery only between 6am and 10pm;
- nightclubs and adult entertainment venues.

(Accessed 14th April 2021).

From 26 April

Outdoor hospitality can open.

If public health conditions permit, the following relaxations can go ahead:

- organised outdoor activities will be permitted for up to 30 people
- outdoor wedding receptions will be permitted for up to 30 people
- outdoor visitor attractions can open

From 24 April

6 people from 6 households will be able to meet outdoors (not including children under 11 years of age or carers from those households).

(Accessed 20th April 2021)

Transport and Travel guidance

Welsh Government advice:

Rail services

Rail passengers must wear a face covering.

British Transport Police (BTP) will:

- patrol stations
- support railway staff
- remind the public to follow the government advice

If you do not follow or you ignore the advice from BTP you may receive a fine.

Bus services

Bus passengers must wear a face covering.

Some bus operators are running a reduced service.

Free weekend travel on the Traws Cymru network is currently unavailable.

Blue Badges

During the COVID-19 pandemic local authorities continue to accept new Blue Badge applications and reapplications but there may be a delay with processing these due to staff shortages and resources being deployed to other priority working areas.

Please continue to apply and if you are reapplying ensure you allow enough time before your badge expires. Local authority staff will respond to you as soon as they are able to.

Welsh Government and other nations will continue to monitor the situation closely and Blue Badge holders should continue to use their badges for journeys, complying with the **rights and responsibilities booklet** and any local restrictions.

Air services

Cardiff Airport has produced advice that you should read if you intend to travel. The airport is operational and the usual measures are in place. For more information please contact **Cardiff Airport, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3BD** – telephone **01446 711111** or email **info@cwl.aero**

MyTravelPass scheme

If you have a Concessionary Travel Pass from a Welsh Local Authority, you can travel free on many TfW trains.

You can travel between:

- **Wrexham – Hawarden Bridge**
- **Machynlleth – Pwllheli** (Cambrian Coast line) – October to March only
- **Llandudno – Blaenau Ffestiniog** (Conwy Valley line)
- **Shrewsbury and Llanelli/Swansea** (Heart of Wales Line) – October to March only

You'll need to get a free ticket from the ticket office before you travel. If there is no ticket office or if it's closed, you can get one from the Conductor on the train.

You'll also **get 1/3 off tickets** to travel on the Cardiff and Valley network after 0930 Monday - Friday and any time at weekends and bank holidays.

Traveline Cymru

Traveline Cymru is a public transport information service funded by the Welsh Government. It works in partnership with operators and local authorities to provide public transport information across Wales for bus, coach and train, as well as walking and cycling routes. The aim is to offer a 'one-stop-shop' for travel information, where you can find all the journey information you'll need in one place, in a few simple steps.

You can call Traveline Cymru's bi-lingual Contact Centre on freephone number **0800 464 0000** with any journey planning queries.

Guide Dogs Cymru travel advice

Guide Dogs Cymru recommend that vision impaired people phone Travel Line Cymru for all queries around bus travel, and Transport for Wales for rail travel (see below for more details).

Guide Dogs has the following tips for people with sight loss when travelling on public transport during the pandemic (although some is specific to England):

Is your journey essential?

- Before you travel, consider if your journey is necessary and if you can stay local
- Try to reduce your travel. This will help keep the transport network running and allow people who need to make essential journeys to travel
- If you feel unwell or have symptoms of Covid-19, do not travel

Plan your journey

If you are using public transport take time to plan your journey in advance. This will help to avoid problems when travelling. If you feel unwell or have symptoms of Covid-19, do not travel

- Although this is not a requirement, it is advisable to contact the train operator you will be using to book assistance in advance

- Reserve seats for train travel and use contactless payment whenever possible
- Travel off-peak if you can
- If you must travel at peak times, check if your transport providers are accepting concessionary passes that usually are restricted to off-peak travel
- Timetables may vary at this time so check with transport providers for up to date information
- Train operators will still provide sighted guide assistance if required. Staff will use appropriate protective equipment to do this
- If you are using Transport for London (TfL) rail or underground services and you request Turn-up-and-go assistance and staff are unable to provide the help required (for example guiding you on an escalator), TfL will arrange an accessible taxi to take you to the nearest accessible point on your journey. You can find more information on the TFL website
- If you're travelling by train with a guide dog, let the operator know when you book your seats and they will ensure there is plenty of space for your dog
- Passenger assistance for train travel can be booked 24 hours in advance on 0800 0223720 or text 60083
- If you are travelling by taxi with your guide dog, make sure you tell the taxi company, when you book, to ensure you are provided with a vehicle that will have space in the rear for you and your guide dog. You will not be permitted to sit in the front passenger seat of a taxi. This is to help with social distancing

When you travel

- Allow extra time for your journey
- When possible, follow the Welsh Government's social distancing guidance from the start to the end of your journey.
- Carry hand sanitiser and wash your hands regularly during your journey
- Don't forget your face covering which is required on all modes of transport
- If travelling with a guide dog, pack a bowl and some water

- Train journeys that would usually provide refreshments are currently limited so you may want to take refreshments for your journey
- To comply with social distancing requirements, transport providers may restrict the number of seats available on their services. Ask for assistance if you need help to find a suitable seat
- Some bus operators have introduced rules on using specific doors to get on or off the bus
- Buses are running at reduced capacity to allow social distancing. If the bus is at capacity, it is unlikely to stop at bus stops to allow more passengers to board
- If you need assistance to scan your travel pass ask a member of staff for verbal guidance to locate the scanner or ask them to scan the pass for you
- The layout of train and bus stations may also be different. For example, there may be a one-way pedestrian system. Check before you travel
- Taxi ranks may have been temporarily relocated at stations
- The street and pedestrian spaces in some areas have been changed to help with social distancing. Contact your local council if you would like more information

Face Coverings

Most passengers are required to wear a face covering when using public transport across the UK. This includes within bus and train stations. However, there are exemptions for some groups including people with sight loss who feel they would have difficulty wearing a face covering.

You are required by law to wear face coverings in taxis and private hire vehicles across Great Britain.

Source: <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/covid19/support-for-people-with-sight-loss/tips-for-people-with-sight-loss-when-travelling-on-public-transport/>

Macular Society: Top tips for travelling to your injections

Are you worried about travelling to your eye clinic for your injection?

Many of you attending regular injections at the hospital have shared concerns about getting to your appointments safely amid the coronavirus outbreak. We've included some tips below, including some alternatives to public transport.

- Firstly, more people are working from home and may have more flexibility to give you a lift to the hospital. If you have a friend, neighbour or family member who can drive you, and who you know has not been exposed to any infection this would be a better option than any type of public transport or community transport service.
- If you would like to be extra cautious you could ask the person transporting you to wear a mask. You also shouldn't be embarrassed or shy in asking about how they are feeling and what measures they've been taking to stay isolated.
- If you are unable to find a friend, neighbour or family member to take you to your appointment then try contacting your local hospital to see if they have a community shuttle service in action.
- You could also try contacting your local blind societies, or organisations such as Age UK who may know of volunteers offering lifts.

If you have no other choice than to take public transport to your appointment, use the following advice:

- Use anti-bacterial wipes to disinfect your seat and any handles you may need to hold
- Most public transport is quieter than usual at the moment so finding a seat on your own may not be difficult, but be sure to sit away from other passengers if you can.
- Use hand sanitiser regularly.
- Wear latex or similar gloves which you can also cleanse with hand sanitiser if you do not have a sink.

- Once at the clinic, you may be asked to dispose of the gloves and to wash your hands, so make sure you take a second pair for your journey home.

The NHS has provided further information about how coronavirus is spread, and what you can do to avoid catching it. This includes the following advice, which all hospital visitors are asked to follow:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

Source: <https://www.macularsociety.org/about/coronavirus/top-tips-travelling-your-injections/>

Train Travel

Transport for Wales (TfW)

TfW's 'Travel Safer' page has lots of useful advice for anyone travelling during the pandemic:

<https://trc.cymru/travel-safer>

The 'Accessible Travel' section of the TfW website has information for people with disabilities on booking, accessibility at stations, and what to do when things go wrong. It also has full details of their advice for disabled people travelling during the pandemic:

<https://tfwrail.wales/before-your-journey/accessible-travel>

TfW offers the Assistance Dogs Travel Scheme, run in partnership with Assistance Dogs (UK)

<https://tfwrail.wales/before-your-journey/accessible-travel/initiatives/assistance-dogs>

.... and a bilingual audio travel guide to assist customers with sight loss plan their journey by train. It provides information on what assistance can be provided at stations and on trains, how to check what facilities are available at stations and how to buy tickets. This can be accessed online here:

<https://tfwrail.wales/before-your-journey/accessible-travel/initiatives/audio-guide>

Great Western Railway

If you have a disability, non-visible disability, or are elderly, you can pre-book assistance with just one call to GWR's team on 0800 197 1329. Alternatively, for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, you can use our Text Relay service by adding the prefix 18001 in front of the number. (Monday to Sunday 06:00 to 23:00). A relay assistant will translate your call to text with the Next Generation Text service.

You can request assistance online, email the Passenger Assist team at passenger.assist@GWR.com or by telephone on 0800 197 1329.

The Rail Ombudsman

Complaints about rails travel should be taken up with the appropriate train company, but if they cannot be resolved, they can be raised with The Rail Ombudsman, an independent, not-for-profit organisation approved by the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards. Contact Centre team is available Monday to Friday: 09:00 – 17:00 on 0330 094 0362

Disabled Person's Railcard

The Disabled Person's Railcard offers one-third off adult rail fares for travel on the National Rail network in Great Britain. If you are travelling with another adult, they will also get 1/3 off their rail fare. There is a charge (currently £20 for 1 year or £54 for 3 years), and proof of entitlement is required.

Email: railcardhelp@nationalrail.co.uk

Phone: 0345 605 0525

Minicom/Textphone: 0345 601 0132

National Railcards, PO Box 10776, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 9FA

Bus Travel

If your primary address is in Wales and you're either aged 60 and over or meet the Government's disability eligibility criteria, you can travel for free on most bus services in Wales, and if your disability limits your ability to travel alone you may be able to get a companion card that will allow someone else to travel with you for free. For more information on how to apply, see the Transport for Wales site:

<https://trc.cymru/travelcards>

You can also ring 0300 303 4240 or email travelcards@tfw.wales with your enquiry or if you require support.

Traveline Cymru's (see above) 'My Health Journey' website allows you to plan your journey to a hospital appointment by public transport, find your bus stops and keep up to date with the latest transport news. Choose a hospital from the menu, give your location and date/time of travel, and it gives full details of the buses that you need to take:

<https://myhealthjourney.traveline.cymru>

Freephone number **0800 464 0000**

Community Transport

Across the UK community transport staff and volunteers help people to stay independent, participate in their communities and access vital public services and employment. It provides flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs, and often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities.

Using everything from minibuses to mopeds, typical services include voluntary car schemes, community bus services, school transport, hospital transport, dial a ride, wheels to work and group hire services. Most are demand responsive, taking people from door to door, but a growing number are scheduled services along fixed routes where conventional bus services aren't available.

Blaenau Gwent

GAVO: 01633 241550

Bridgend

Bridgend Community Transport: 01656 669665

Caerphilly

Pheonix Community Transport: 01495 222187

Cardiff

Royal Voluntary Service: 0808 1963646

Carmarthenshire

[Not listed]

Ceredigion

Ystwyth Community Transport Group: 01974 282409

Conwy

Maria Rees Trust: 03065 656123

Quarry Villages Community Transport Group: 07806 4891166

Denbighshire

Dial-a-Ride Denbighshire Ltd: 01745 344222

South Denbighshire Community Partnership: 01490 266004

Flintshire

Estuary Voluntary Car Scheme: 01352 710149

Welsh Border Community Transport: 01244 544474

Gwynedd

Cymrod Clwb Teithio Dwyfor Travel Club: 01758 614311

Freewheelers Disabled Club Ywyn: 01654 711839

O Ddrws I Ddrws: 01758 721777

Isle of Anglesey

Benllech and District Good Turn Scheme: 01248 852389

Isle of Anglesey County Council: 01248 752375

Merthyr Tydfil

[Not listed]

Monmouthshire

[Not listed]

Neath Port Talbot

DANSA Ltd: 01639 751067

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: 01639 686094

Newport

Newport City Council: 01633 851584

Pembrokeshire

Preseli Rural Transport Association: 01239 698506

Powys

Brecon and District DisABLEd Club: 01874 624060

Hay and District Dial a Ride: 01497 821616

Llanwrtyd Wells Community Transport Project: 01982 552727

Rhayader and District Community Support Ltd: 01597 810921

Ystradgynlais Community Car Scheme: 01639 849720

Rhondda Cynon Taf

Accessible Caring Transport: 01443 478013

Village and Valleys (RCT) Community Transport Ltd: 01443 858462

Swansea

City and County of Swansea: 01792 636079

Gower Voluntary Transport: 01792 851942

Pontarddulais and District Community Car Scheme: 01792 882606

Torfaen

Torfaen Community Transport: 01633 874686

Vale of Glamorgan

Bush Accessible Transport Services: 01443 857022

Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern: 02920 513700

East Vale Community Transport: 029 20705138

Vale of Glamorgan Council: 01446 704870

Wreccsam

[Not listed]

Source: <https://ctauk.org/find-ct-provider/>