



# **Covid-19: Travel Confidence Survey**

17<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The following quotes are taken from the open-ended questions that RiDC panel members responded to in our Covid-19 Travel Confidence survey. In this summary we have grouped the comments by various themes that emerged from the data.

## **Reasons for not using public transport at all after the full relaxation of restrictions**

### **Lack of trust in government**

“I do not trust anything the government tells us about public transport safety.”

### **Specific Covid-19 vulnerability**

“As someone who is at high risk of catching the virus, I am \*not\* confident about using public transport until there is a proven effective vaccine available. There are simply too many possible vectors for infection, and people are becoming more and more lax about preventative measures as restrictions are being lifted”

“I am particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 and so do not intend to venture forth until a vaccine or a cure arrives”

### **Perceived lack of safety and assistance**

“Don’t feel safe - too many people not wearing face masks or social distancing - no respect for the needs of those who are vulnerable to infection.”

“It is not safe and there is no one making sure people wear marks, that includes staff and police, there needs to be extra staff and security.”

“The availability of Special Assistance, this was very poor before the pandemic, my concern is that this will get worse”

## **Negative experiences and perceptions of current use of public transport**

### **Concerns about changes to infrastructure**

“The one way system (on the underground) does not seem to have been created with consideration to disabled people's access needs. While I appreciate that we all have to make some changes for covid safety measures, the disabled community is already disproportionately limited regarding access to public transport given that most tube stations, especially in central London are not step free. I'm gravely concerned about the lack of disabled access being the new normal.”

“TFL have changed their policy in relation to the wheelchair space on their services. It can now only be occupied by one wheelchair user and no longer shared with the buggy user because of social distancing however drivers and passengers do not seem to be aware of this”

### **Concerns about hygiene and adequate ventilation**

“Hygiene, social distancing and hand sanitisers are non-existent on public transport, especially trams as most people do not wear masks and the drivers say it is not their job to police the passengers, so the Government guidelines are ignored the same as in supermarkets.”

“Concerned about ventilation within public transport re-lingering virus in the air.”

### **Lack of availability of staff and assistance**

“It appears that the companies have used Covid as an excuse to reduce staff numbers and customer services to the minimum. Very concerned that they will not be resumed. Disability means that customer services are essential and at the moment it is very difficult to travel due to the lack of staff support.”

“For their own safety, Northern Rail guards have been told not to come down the train to collect tickets or give information, if you need help on the train this can cause major issues, some train operating companies should have followed the example of Trans Pennine Express who have a

WhatsApp number that you can talk to somebody if you need help on a service.”

“I am blind and would normally rely on being guided when in unfamiliar environments. Since I cannot currently rely on guidance being available, I am deliberately limiting my use of public transport, only travelling when it is essential for my work. Greater clarity around assistance provision would give me the confidence to travel more”

“I have not used the Underground since Covid-19 due to their policy of not providing guiding assistance to blind visitors”

### **Concerns about staff and fellow passengers not adhering to government guidelines**

“Public transport is my only option as I’m nearly blind, my safety is dependent on companies complying with govt guidelines and other passengers complying with safety in my experience they don’t so I am constantly at risk”

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, my main concern would be ensuring that people observe social distancing on transport and, consequently, how prepared staff would be (e.g. the bus driver) to ensure observance. As a traveller, you’d be at the mercy of how committed the driver was to the passenger safety”

### **Lack of mask wearing and enforcement**

“Most people are not wearing a facemask or wearing it properly”

“Very little seems to be done to enforce wearing face masks or social distancing. No one wants to challenge anyone in case they get hurt by the person they are reminding of their obligations to others. Young people in particular seem to think they are immune from Covid”

“Still a very grey area over wearing a face mask on public transport especially on the trains. Some train operating companies say you should just wear the mask when you are travelling, some train operating companies say you must wear the mask immediately when you go onto the station and when you're travelling. No wonder people are confused”

### **Issues concerning mask exemptions**

“I am exempt from wearing a mask but refused boarding unless I did”

“Despite the fact that I am technically exempt from wearing a mask because I'm autistic I try and make the effort, but you will find that if you don't wear the mask on public transport people will stare at you, making you feel uncomfortable”

“I'm very concerned and angry that the Government have barely said anything about mask exemptions on public transport. They announced the mandatory mask wearing with a day or two's notice. As a result, this has not made the public aware of exemptions & why they are used. This needs to be robustly taken up with Government officials. Life is already difficult enough for disabled & chronically sick people, without this & we suffer enough prejudice.”

### **Difficulties lipreading staff or fellow passengers wearing a mask**

“As a Deaf person with additional disabilities, the main problem I face is being unable to lipread and see facial expressions because of people wearing masks. There are at least 12 million people in the UK who rely on lip reading yet the Government has given no thought to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community when ordering everyone to wear a mask”

“Staff should wear see-through visors so deaf people can lipread.”

### **Positive experiences and perceptions of current use of public transport**

“Staff at main line stations in London were very helpful in giving out masks and offering hand sanitiser”

“Used Passenger Assistance at Market Harborough, Leicester, Birmingham and Great Malvern rail stations. Very efficient and no problems. Staff appeared well aware of restrictions and were very helpful and supportive.”

“My personal experience getting help at East Croydon and London Victoria was extremely positive with staff willing to guide me as before. This extended to staff on the train