



2020  
CIVITAS  
Cleaner and better transport in cities

PORTIS



## Travel Planning Promotion Aberdeen City and Shire

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Kelly Wiltshire and Lucy Johnston	
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## Abstract

The purpose of this document is to promote travel planning messages to support residents, businesses, parents and other organisations or community groups in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in response to the ongoing Covid- 19 Pandemic.

## Objectives

- a. To promote better travel awareness, including reducing the need to travel and encourage more business and other organisations to develop and implement travel planning activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- b. Cultural change to encourage physical distancing, safe travel practices and move to more active travel.
- c. To reduce the negative impact of traffic in terms of congestion, air quality, environmental impact and road safety concerns.
- d. Help to improve the health of everyone by encouraging physical distancing and active travel.

## Project Partners

Organisation	Country	Abbreviation
Nestrans	UK	ABZ

## Document History

Date	Person	Action	Status	Diss. Level

	Kelly Wiltshire	Initial Draft	Ongoing	
	Lucy Johnston		Ongoing	
	Alan Simpson	Comments on draft	July 2020	
	Kelly Wiltshire	Report published on Nestrans website	Sept 2020	

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Dissemination Level: PC = Project Coordinator, SC=Site Coordinator, TC=Technical Coordinator, EM=Evaluation Manager.

## 1 Covid-19 restrictions and its impact on travel and transport

In March 2020, restrictions on daily life in the UK started in response to a global pandemic.

Other than essential workers, the UK's workforce were instructed to work from home where possible. Many workers were placed on furlough while some lost their jobs or faced redundancy.

Schools, colleges, universities, and places of worship were all closed, as well as non-essential shops and services, cinemas, bars, libraries, museums, leisure facilities and playparks. Restaurants and cafés could operate on a takeaway or delivery basis only.

This meant that the way people travel and what transport they use has changed significantly. Travel behaviour will likely remain changed for some time as we go through the process of easing restrictions and it may never return to pre-Covid-19 levels.

This means that this strategy and future planning for travel and transport is very much changing and will continue to change depending on easing of lockdown restrictions when treatment and/or a vaccine for Covid-19 becomes widely available.

Our baseline data may not be as relevant in a post Covid-19 world. The daily commute, which is a key element of travel planning, has stopped for many people while working from home and using technology to communicate has become the norm in many professions

Our usual travel hierarchy has changed beyond recognition. Air travel had all but stopped until lockdown restrictions eased. Public Transport timetables were reduced significantly and are recovering slowly with initial official advice stating that public transport should only be used if people are well, wearing face covering and physical distancing. Payment should be made by contactless card where possible, this has now changed to using public transport safety trying to avoid peak hours and continuing to wear a face covering and physical distancing where possible. Car/vehicle sharing (unless an essential worker) is not promoted due to the fact that social distancing in a vehicle is not possible, so people are encouraged to travel separately if possible. If car sharing outside of a household is required, then car windows should be opened to allow ventilation, and face coverings should be worn. Walking and cycling for exercise, leisure and commuting is still very much encouraged.

This has led many to question whether travelling for work after Covid-19 will be the same. While once seen as improbable or only achievable in the future, working exclusively from home and communicating with customers, stakeholders and colleagues via teleconferencing is now the norm for many.

It has become clear that internet access/mobile phone signal and computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones are swiftly becoming an essential item for all and access to these is a key part of being able to continue to work, communicate with family and friends and order and receive goods and services including health care appointments. This needs to be reflected in future strategies and equalities assessments.

Traffic numbers at the beginning of lockdown plummeted, due to the number of people working from home, the disappearance of the school run, and restrictions from travelling out of the local area. While climate change causing emissions have declined and air quality has improved, traffic numbers are now beginning to recover. Accordingly, the “Spaces for People” funded measures are being implemented in Aberdeen City Centre and across Aberdeenshire to help to stop congestion, limit air quality problems and encourage active travel. The traffic flows on our roads are increasing as restrictions are lifted and more people are travelling for work, education and leisure.

People are walking and cycling far more than they did before the lockdown. It is important that we support this increase in active travel so that as restrictions continue to ease so that people are empowered to adopt these changes where possible on a more permanent basis as life returns to the new normal.

## 1.1 Phased approach

In May, the UK Government produced advice for those living in England, whilst the other home nations of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland produced advice for residents in their respective areas.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020, the Scottish Government announced their route map for a four-phase process out of the lockdown. The document highlights that whilst certain restrictions will begin to ease, we can expect to observe restrictions on travel and physical distancing measures for some time to come. The timings of these phases will be affected by infection levels of the virus and based upon guidance from the Scottish Government. We may move back or forward through the phases depending on virus rates and 'local lockdowns' may be put in place.

### Scottish Government COVID-19 Routemap



Lockdown	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<p><b>Lockdown restrictions:</b></p> <p>Stay at home with essential travel only, staying in local area.</p> <p>Active travel including walking and cycling in local area for daily exercise.</p> <p>Public transport operating with limited service and capacity with physical distancing.</p> <p>Passengers recommended to wear face coverings, only to travel for essential purposes and to avoid busy routes/periods.</p>	<p>As with previous phase but with the following changes:</p> <p>Consistent with the reopening of workplaces set out in this phase, where home working is not possible businesses and organisations are encouraged to manage travel demand through staggered start times and flexible working patterns.</p> <p>Permitted to travel short distances for outdoor leisure and exercise but advice to stay within a short distance of your local community (broadly within 5 miles) and travel by walk, wheel and cycle where possible.</p> <p>International border health measures are introduced.</p>	<p>As with previous phase but with the following changes:</p> <p>Consistent with the reopening of workplaces set out in this phase, where home working is not possible businesses and organisations are encouraged to manage travel demand through staggered start times and flexible working patterns.</p> <p>People are permitted to drive locally for leisure purposes.</p> <p>Public transport operating increased services but capacity still significantly limited to allow for physical distancing. Travel at peak times discouraged as far as possible.</p> <p>May be geographical differences depending on circumstances.</p>	<p>As with previous phase but with the following changes:</p> <p>Can drive beyond local area for leisure and exercise purposes.</p> <p>Public transport operating full services but capacity still significantly limited to allow for physical distancing. Travel at peak times discouraged as far as possible.</p> <p>May be geographical differences depending on circumstances.</p>	<p>As with previous phase but with the following changes:</p> <p>Public transport operating full service.</p> <p>Physical distancing may remain in place.</p>



Figure 1: Covid-19 Framework for Decision Making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis, Scottish Government, May 2020.

## 1.2 Short to Medium Term Changes to Travel Planning

Although restrictions have eased and people have started to travel more due to more organisations opening and lockdown restrictions easing slightly, physical distancing is still expected to remain in place until at least Phase 4. At this stage it is expected that the virus will remain suppressed to very low levels and will no longer be considered a significant threat to public health. This may take many months to achieve and local lockdowns may be introduced if levels of infection rise.

In the short to medium term, we must reflect these restrictions in the way we plan and encourage people to travel. This in turn, will impact the long-term travel planning strategy.

These restrictions will especially affect those who do not have access to a private car and are reliant on public transport. It may also affect those who are unable to actively travel or do not have access to technology or a suitable network connection to allow them to work from home, do online shopping or interact with others virtually.

### 1.3 An adapted travel hierarchy

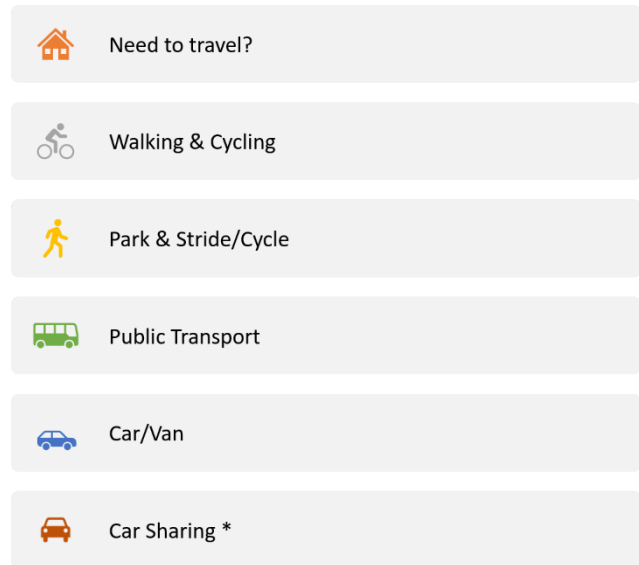
The travel hierarchy that was traditionally encouraged will need to shift for the foreseeable future.

#### Need to Travel?

As far as possible, we need fewer people to travel. So far, we have experienced a surge in the number of people working from home.

If you do need to travel then could you travel outside of peak times?

In future, many people are likely to continue working from home or travel to work much less frequently, so this may reduce all trips in all modes.



In order to allow for physical distancing, an increasing amount of health care appointments are happening via 'near me' appointments, telephone, video and by sending photographs via email, for those who are seeking advice or do not require 'hand on' treatment. This is likely to continue after the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. This may have some positive benefits as it will make access to health easier for those who struggle to travel to appointments.

Many businesses have adapted their business models to become delivery/collection-based services. This may also continue in future as people are able to order and get items delivered or collected locally, rather than travelling to a shop or restaurant.

Many others have started to shop local. Particularly local smaller farm shops, hardware stores and bike shops. In future we may see a higher proportion of people staying within their local area rather than travelling further afield. This may change if and when lockdown continues to ease.

#### Walking & Cycling

For those who are travelling, the primary guidance will be to encourage walking, wheeling (wheelchair or mobility scooter) & cycling, where at all possible. For essential journeys that require travel further afield, cycling will be promoted, with e-bike and e-cargo bikes particularly useful in this instance for carrying goods and small children slightly longer distances.

Both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have applied for the Scottish Government's Spaces for People fund, to put in place temporary infrastructure to allow people to safely undertake travel for essential trips, queue safely outside of shops or at bus stops and exercise. Measures taking place include road closures, pedestrianisation, pavement widening, temporary bike and bus lanes, and one-way systems. NHS Grampian have also secured funding to help social distancing across their estate.

For those whose travel distance is too far to walk or cycle, safe use of public transport and car/van use is encouraged. Where possible, people will be encouraged to incorporate an active travel element into their journey, continuing the last part of their trip by parking the car and then walking or cycling for the rest of their journey. This is important to ensure that congestion and air quality problems do not occur, particularly in towns and near the city centre.

## Public Transport

Although the general use of public transport was discouraged for everyone but essential workers this is now changing, and we will support those who need to travel in this way. The public transport sector faces substantial constraints both in terms of the number of services running and the safe capacity at which those services can run. Timetables and services have been directly affected although most timetables are starting to begin a more normal service. Physical distancing, wearing of face coverings and good hygiene is still required.

Capacity on buses is likely to be around 50% of 'before lockdown' levels to allow passengers to physically distance onboard. For the same reason, capacity on trains is also reduced. This may increase if physical distancing rules change. Whilst some operators such as LNER are requiring tickets with seat reservations to be booked in advance, this is not expected to be implemented on ScotRail services.

There will also be a need to physically distance whilst waiting for services at bus stop, train platforms and in waiting rooms. The use of hand sanitiser and hand washing after journeys, as well as appropriate respiratory hygiene are strongly encouraged. The use of face coverings became mandatory from 22 June 2020, with exemptions for small children and those with health conditions, in all forms of public transport save for those travelling by ferry, where physical distancing is easier, or seating is outdoors on deck.

ScotRail have said that they cannot guarantee that people will be able to physically distance.

## Car/Van

Use of private vehicles such as cars and vans are expected to increase, particularly as we progress through the latter stages of the route map where travel further than the local area is permitted. Many people who previously used public transport, may use private cars, due to changes to timetables and reduced frequency of services. Although these services are continuing to increase as lockdown eases. They may also have concerns over safety and their

health of using public transport if others do not abide by social distancing rules, wearing facemasks, hand washing etc.

Businesses may also encourage separate vehicles for work purposes when previously staff may have shared a vehicle as part of work.

This raises concerns for an increase in inequalities whereby those without access to a private car or van, may feel isolated and discriminated against when accessing services. This may also lead to an increase in inappropriate parking, congestion, poor air quality and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Electric and hybrid vehicles are still a great way to travel sustainably. Electric charging points are still working, although using hand sanitizer or washing hands before and after touching the charging equipment is encouraged.

## Car Sharing\*

Whilst car sharing is normally promoted as a good sustainable option at present the guidance is that you should only travel with members of your own, or extended, household.

**The Scottish Government currently advise against all carsharing outwith your household.**

If is no alternative but to travel with people outwith your household. On such occasions, you should:

- keep to small groups of people at any one time
- maintain good ventilation by keeping the car windows open if possible
- ask everyone to wear face-coverings
- clean your hands before and after your journey
- clean the door handles and other areas that people touch.

## Car Clubs

Co-Wheels Car club vehicles are still available for hire. These cars are now being cleaned and treated with cleaning products that are meant to stop the growth of germs for 30 days. Good hand hygiene and sharing the cars in line with government guidelines is still required.

## 1.4 Communications & Promotion

The initial plan for this Civitas Portis work package was focussed on the promotion of the new railway station at Kintore, and the local rail service running through the area's railway stations from Inverurie to Aberdeen City Centre.



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the opening of the station at Kintore has been delayed. The construction has now started again and the station will hopefully be ready to open later this year. The capacity and frequency of trains as well as the introduction of safety rules such as wearing facemasks and physical distancing has changed dramatically since the start of 2020. Our messaging for promoting rail and other public transport therefore has needed to change to reflect new and changing government advice.

Instead, the new travel planning messages will focus on two key messages. One to promote walking and cycling along this route, and two, if you are going to use public transport, how to use it safely and observe government guidance on physical distancing. This has been done via radio adverts and outdoor advertising such as billboards and bus shelters and via social media. Television adverts are being created.

#### 1.4.1 Aims

- **Supporting those who need to travel via public transport to feel safe to do so by promoting health & safety messages**
- **Promoting active travel as an alternative choice to private car**
- **Sustained behaviour changes**
- **Encouraging alternative choices**
- **Achieving positive and lasting change in sustainable travel habits**
- **Helping people to make informed travel choices during COVID-19 restrictions**
- **Keeping people safe and healthy whilst travelling**

#### 1.4.2 Key Messages

All the below messages are subject to change in line with government guidance everyone is encouraged to check the guidance regularly. The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are updating their advice and guidance here: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/advice-on-how-to-travel-safely/>

### Public Transport Messages

- Do not travel if you feel unwell

- Face coverings are mandatory - although exemptions apply for under 5s and those with a health condition
- Avoid travelling during peak hours as far as possible
- Plan in advance & remember your usual service may be at its safe capacity limit
- Maintain physical distancing and follow guidance from your operator both inside the bus or train and at the station or bus stop.
- Sanitize or wash your hands before and after your journey

### Active Travel message:

One of the most difficult things about behaviour change is attempting to break an old habit. The impact of Covid-19 and the resulting restrictions have put a pin in life as we know it. With a growing intention to 'build back better' among all aspects of life, and it is hoped that by encouraging people to travel actively during lockdown, they will be more inclined to build active travel into their daily lives, for shopping, leisure and as the local restrictions ease for work and school commutes. There have been many new initiatives put in place over recent weeks and more to come as part of '[Spaces for People](#)' funding, to help with physical distancing, queuing outside of shops and allow walking and cycling to be made easier and more attractive, particularly in our town and city centres. People are also encouraged if they are unable to walk or cycle for their whole journey then to travel by active for part of their journey where possible. For example. Drive to a park and ride location then walk or cycle the remainder of the way.

Guidance for businesses and further information on individual locations are available [here](#)

Below are the Getabout poster adverts. The advertising space was funded as part of the Civitas Portis project. The Adverts appeared on digital and print sites such as bus shelters and bill boards between Inverurie and Aberdeen during August 2020, which was the corridor that 2ABZ2 collective travel project was based along and as explained earlier the advertising plan changed from promoting Kintore and rail travel along that route to promoting active travel and safe use of public transport in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

# Keep yourself and others safe whilst travelling



However you're travelling from A-B,  
keep up-to-date on the latest travel advice  
with **Getabout**

# Scott cycles to work. Could you?



However you're travelling from A-B,  
keep up-to-date on the latest travel advice  
with **Getabout**

# Hannah walks to school. Could you?



However you're travelling from A-B,  
keep up-to-date on the latest travel advice  
with **Getabout**



[getabout.org.uk](http://getabout.org.uk)

# Keep yourself and others safe whilst travelling



However you're travelling from A-B,  
keep up-to-date on the latest travel advice  
with **Getabout**

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have also been encouraging people to walk and cycle for all or part of their journeys. Aberdeen City Council are also monitoring their Spaces for People project through their network of walking and cycling counters and this data is being published regularly. It is available to access [here](#)

Some of the images for this campaign are below. These messages should complement the above campaign and messages.





### Thistle Assistance Card

Another message we are promoting as part of the short to medium term travel planning is the Thistle Assistance Card.

The Thistle Assistance Card is something that was developed through Transport Scotland and the Regional Transport Partnerships over the last few years to allow those with disabilities, including hidden disabilities to discreetly be able to tell public transport drivers and or staff if they required extra assistance or help. These Thistle Assistance cards have now been expanded to include those who may not be able to wear a face covering on public transport due to a health condition.

The key message is if you are unable to wear a face covering on public transport due to a health condition. The Thistle Assistance Card may be able to help you. If you already have a thistle assistance card, you can write on it that you are exempt from wearing a face covering due to a health condition. There is also a Thistle Card app you can download onto your smart phone. [www.thistleassistance.com](http://www.thistleassistance.com)

The latest information on travel and transport in the North East of Scotland is available on [www.getabout.org.uk](http://www.getabout.org.uk) and on the Getabout and Nestrans social media where the latest travel and transport updates will be shared.



Nestrans are also encouraging businesses to think about how their staff may travel to work during the easing of lockdown and into the future. Nestrans have a Sustainable Travel Grant which is match funding available to organisations who considering measures such as improving walking and cycling or changing facilities at their workplace. Further information on the grant, the criteria and how to apply is available [here](#).

Nestrans are also doing a free E-Cargo Bike Trial as part of Civitas Portis to encourage Aberdeen city centre businesses to swap a car or van for local deliveries to an E-Cargo Bike. Further information is available [here](#).

Nestrans are also trying to gather information on travel attitudes and behaviour as lockdown eases which will be done as a series of surveys. The first two surveys results are available on the Nestrans [website](#) and the further surveys will be added to this page once they have been completed. Hopefully these surveys will help us to inform and develop guidance and policies as we start to travel more as restrictions ease. These surveys are part funded by Paths for All 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund'.



## Smarter Choices, Smarter Places

Supporting Sustainable Travel