North & South Essex Local Medical Committees Ltd

15th July 2020

Re: Guidance note for patients requesting exemption letters

We are aware that some patients might be understandably anxious about the Government's recent announcements around the use of face masks/coverings in various public settings.

GPs are unfortunately **not** in a position to provide individual risk assessments or letters for patients who feel that they should be exempt from wearing a face mask/covering.

North and South Essex Local Medical Committees have therefore prepared this guidance note as the statutory body that advises and supports all GPs and practice teams across Essex.[1]

The government guidance on exemptions suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption therefore it is sufficient for an individual to self-declare this.

In respect of public transport, the responsibility for issuing exemptions lies with the transport provider not your GP. Similarly, practices are under no obligation to provide letters of support for anyone who does not fall under the list of exemptions but who considers themselves to have another reason to be exempted.

Government advice on the use of face coverings can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#face-coverings

Some people don't have to wear a face covering including for health, age or equality reasons. Some transport staff may not wear a face covering if it is not required for their job.

We hope that this guidance provides some reassurance for you on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Balmer
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North & South Essex LMCs Ltd

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