



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ83757

Janet Finch Saunders MS
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23 November 2021

Dear Janet,

With regard to the holding reply you were sent on 12 November please find a substantive reply to your WQ 83757.

Janet Finch-Saunders (Aberconwy): Will the Minister make a statement on the ability of enforcement agencies to effectively uphold current Welsh Government COVID-19 requirements for mask wearing on public transport?
(WQ83757)

It remains the law in Wales to wear a face covering on public transport, including taxis. Enforcement of this law is the responsibility of the respective police forces in Wales. This includes Police Community Support Officers and the British Transport Police for trains, or a person designated by the Welsh Ministers or a Local Authority.

As passenger numbers increase on our trains ensuring all passengers are taking personal responsibility and complying with face-covering measures is becoming increasingly challenging. Transport for Wales (TfW) are deploying more security and enforcement resources to areas where intelligence is showing a deficit in compliance. More security and police presence have been arranged during commuting hours. TfW are also altering their communications and engagement to address passengers' behaviours. TfW are actively reminding all on-board train staff of the importance of making regular announcements throughout journeys and to remind passengers of the need to wear a face covering for the duration of their journey, unless exempt. TfW's monitoring is showing that each week more and more people are claiming an exemption. TfW has also targeted early engagement with rugby fans, for example, during the autumn internationals series.

Train staff and security promote safe behaviours, working closely with the British Transport Police (BTP) to do this. Train staff and security teams cannot enforce the law and can only advise, educate and promote compliance by passengers. Enforcement can only be done by the BTP.

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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.

We provide the BTP in Wales with revenue funding which contributes towards the costs of 21 PCSO's and a north Wales Inspector for BTP Wales. In addition, a three year pilot scheme providing a Sergeant and five PCSO's across Rhyl, Machynlleth and Tenby is currently undergoing evaluation. Additional operational support is also provided under our Programme for Government commitments. This is substantial Welsh Government contribution in a non-devolved area which makes a significant positive impact to the number of operational personnel in Wales reducing crime and making our railways safer for passengers

For buses, we monitor this issue, via our regular meetings with the two bus industry trade bodies and Directors of bus companies in Wales. We have not been made aware of any enforcement difficulties where they have sought the assistance of their respective Welsh Police Force or Local Authority regarding passengers refusing to wear a face covering.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change