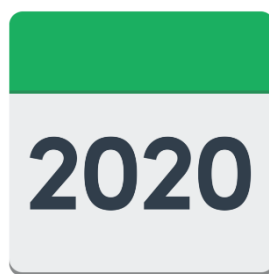




**A message to communities
from Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie**





Police Scotland work to keep people safe and protect all our communities.

Coronavirus has made a big difference to all our lives.

We know that sticking to the guidance can be difficult.



The Scottish Government guidance has exemptions because everyone has different needs.

An exemption means you don't have to do something.



There is a list of exemptions in the guidance for people who cannot wear face coverings.

The list is on the [Scottish Government website](#).



Exemptions are:

- you have a disability or health condition and a face covering would cause you difficulty, pain or worry.
- you find it difficult to put a face covering on and wear it safely.



Some children and young people may find it difficult to wear a face covering, for example if they have breathing difficulties or a disability.



- you need to eat or drink.
- you are taking medication.



- you are communicating with someone who uses lip reading.



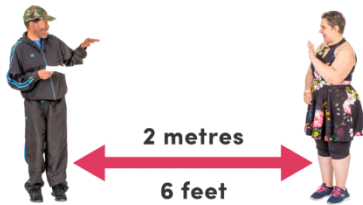
Some people are frightened to go out in their communities.



Some disabled people have told us they have been abused in shops or on public transport.

People have been shouted at, made to feel uncomfortable or frightened.

Organisations that we work with told us some disabled people find physical distancing difficult.



This could be because they:

- cannot see well
- have autism
- have a physical disability or other issues.



Police Scotland want to let disabled people know that we take reports of people being targeted seriously.



We want people to think about how the guidance affects disabled people before they challenge people.

We want disabled people to feel safe in their communities.



We want people to know more about how things affect disabled people.

We will work with the Scottish Government and other partners to do this.



Police Scotland has given guidance to police officers and staff to make sure they think about disability when they are talking to people.



Some disabled people may choose to carry a card or wear a lanyard round their neck to show they have exemptions from wearing face coverings or to show that they have a disability.

Nobody has to carry information or to show it to anyone.



Police Scotland officers will not ask you to provide any evidence of an exemption or disability.



We support your right to carry an exemption card if it makes you feel more confident to go out.



Police Scotland want to work with the public and keep everyone safe.

We will:

- Engage: - talk to the person to find out what their situation is and if they know about the guidance.



- Explain that the guidance is there to stop people putting their health at risk.



- Encourage people to do what the guidance says.

- Enforce: make sure people follow the rules.



If people do not follow the rules and they don't have an exemption we can give them a fine.

A fine is money that must be paid.



We want to make sure no person or group in Scotland feels they are being bullied or picked on.

We will not put up with hate crime.



If this happens to you or you see it happening to someone please tell us about it:



You can get in touch with Police Scotland by:

- calling 101, or 999 in an emergency.



- using SMS 999 – you must [register for this service](#) before using it.



- using Text Relay with the BT Relay UK app or textphone



- using the online hate crime reporting form on the Police Scotland website.



Hate Crime can also be reported at a third party reporting centre.

More information on third party reporting is on the [Police Scotland website](#).