

Coronavirus – national exemption scheme for those who cannot wear a mask

The charity Age Scotland welcomes the news that The Scottish Government is to introduce a national scheme for those unable to wear a mask.

The reasons for any exemption will be medical ones.

The national charity for older people have been in discussions with the Scottish Government for months about establishing a national recognition card or badge following large number of calls from older people that they had been refused entry to shops and transport for not wearing one, despite being medically exempt.

Stigma about not wearing one and challenges from other members of the public have caused many people unable to wear a face covering distress and anxiety when leaving their home.

Age Scotland's chief executive Brian Sloan said: "It is great news that there will soon be a recognised face coverings exemption card. We have been in discussions with the Scottish Government for a number of months making the case for this to be rolled out nationwide following large number of calls to our helpline from older people.

"Many people have been concerned that despite their exemption for medical reasons, they have been denied entry to shops,

transport and public spaces unless they were able to prove their status.

“While we should all be tolerant of others and accept that some are exempt, the negative experiences and stigma faced on a regular basis by those unable to wear a covering means that this kind of scheme is necessary.

“This new scheme should offer those who are unable to wear a mask a level of comfort, ease the anxieties they experience when out in public and, while it should be unnecessary, demonstrate to others around them that they have a legitimate reason for being unable to cover their mouth and nose”.