

2020-05-21

PRESS RELEASE

Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations reports progress and growing support.

This version: 2020-05-21

Embargo: 2020-05-21 12:30pm

Following the submission of its [Ride COVID Safe White Paper](#) to the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, last week, progress has been made and support is growing.

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Motorcycling Group, Chris Law MP, said:

“I very much welcome this initiative and the partnership between the organisations which created it. Motorcycling does have an enormous role to play in any transport policy if we are to see a long term reduction in congestion and pollution, and the Parliamentary Motorcycle Group has long advocated this. The riders’ code announced last week provides invaluable advice to those using motorcycles during the Covid19 crisis, and I urge all motorcyclists to take it into account and ride safe during these extraordinary times. As Chair of the APMG I strongly urge Ministers and the DfT to fully recognise motorcycles as a transport mode”

In a written response to a Parliamentary Question raised by Christopher Chope MP, Rachel Maclean, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Transport) and MP for Redditch stated:

“The Department’s guidance issued on 12 May refers to ‘Private cars and other vehicles’ as an alternative to using public transport, and encourages the public to ‘consider all other forms of transport before using public transport’. This would include private vehicles such as motorcycles and mopeds where the journey to be made is appropriate.

Motorcycles are an important way of getting around, and we are working on a number of projects, including sorting out potholes, which are a problem for people on motorcycles and other two-wheeled vehicles. I encourage people to adopt the electric motorbike.”

IAM RoadSmart, the UK's leading road safety charity and advocate, have endorsed the White Paper. Neil Greig, Policy & Research Director for IAM RoadSmart said:

“IAM RoadSmart strongly support the key role of motorcycling in helping to get everyone around safely and in kick starting the economy as the Covid19 crisis reduces. It offers a winning combination of instant social distancing and cheap and efficient travel. We can’t wait to get back out on the road to deliver our mission to produce safer riders, but for now we have to agree with this report that only essential travel for work or responsible recreation is allowed. “

The Coalition still awaits a formal response from the Department of Transport. They have also sought but still await feedback from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the National Police Chiefs Council.



The Coalition has noted much media interest in reporting complaints about motorcyclists' behaviour, particularly during the first weekend since lockdown restrictions were eased in England. Less widespread is reporting of the ongoing valuable work of motorcycle riding volunteers such as the Bike Shed Community Response initiative and of long established organisations like the Blood Bikers. The positives far outweigh the few bad stories making the headlines.

The joint position of the Coalition's members is that responsible, safe use of motorcycles should be encouraged within the framework of Government guidelines and related legislation. A uniform approach to policing the regulations will be assisted by clear communication of unambiguous advice. That is the most urgent element of our proposed guidelines. Of equal and more lasting importance is recognition of the role of motorcycling in our nation's transport system. As a transport mode offering social distancing benefits acknowledged by the Department for Transport, motorcycling is, as Grant Shapps has commented, "an enormously important way of getting around".

The Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations consists of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the Vintage Motorcycle Club (VMCC), the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) and the British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF).

Issued on behalf of the Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations by the Motorcycle Action Group

Press and other enquiries c/o MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org

ENDS

Notes for editors

The White Paper "Riding COVID safe: a discussion paper" can be accessed here:
<https://bit.ly/2LqZSrt>

In summary, our current advice is:

- As lockdown measures are eased, whether you ride for essential reasons or just for recreation, observe social distancing and good hygiene measures at all times to help halt transmission of the virus.
- Ride alone or with, at most, one other person, other than members of your own household.
- Stay well away from other people. Take food and drink etc with you.
- Be COVID-safe at fuel stops.
- Do not gather in crowds.
- Know what COVID safety kit you are going to take with you and use it sensibly.
- Plan your route so you can always return home safely the same day.



- Know how you are going to deal safely with any emergencies.
- Do not ride at all if you or members of your household have symptoms and need to self-isolate.
- Think carefully about the risks if you are over 70 or have a pre-existing condition.
- Don't damage the image of motorcycling in the lockdown by riding irresponsibly.
- Be aware that, at present, the guidelines for leaving the house for other than essential reasons may be different in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

