



Department
for Transport

Rupa Huq MP
House of Commons
London
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From the Minister of State
Chris Heaton-Harris MP

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Dear Rupa,

Thank you for your letter of 15 May to the Prime Minister, on behalf of forty-three MPs, about the death in service of transport workers in London during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your letter has been transferred to this Department and I am replying as the Minister responsible for this area.

I appreciate you taking the time to raise your concerns and those of your fellow MPs. I was deeply saddened by the regrettable death of Belly Mujinga. In these uncertain times, the railway has a vital role to play in ensuring that those who must travel can do so and that vital supplies are kept moving, and we have been clear that the safety of railway staff remains of paramount importance. I am enormously grateful to the frontline workers who, like Ms Mujinga, have worked tirelessly to help us overcome this crisis.

The families of transport workers who die from COVID-19 may receive significant death in service benefits from the worker's relevant pension scheme. These specific arrangements will vary across employers. We will also continue to review across the Government the support provided to key workers on the frontline.

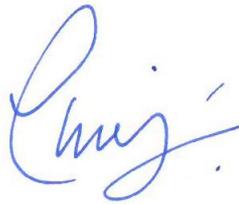
In regard to personal protective equipment (PPE) for transport workers, the new mandatory requirement for passengers does not require staff to wear a face covering. However, face coverings offer some benefits in situations where social distancing is difficult to manage, such as when working in passenger facing roles.

Public health advice is that staff should wear a face covering when they are unable to maintain social distancing in passenger facing roles, recognising that there will be exceptional circumstances when a staff member cannot wear a face covering, or when their task makes it sensible (based on a risk assessment) for them not to wear a face covering. However, where a staff member is already using PPE in their work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, they should continue to do so.

I appreciate this is a difficult time for everybody and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to frontline workers for their continued dedication to helping us battle through the COVID-19 health emergency. It is only by continuing to work together that we will be able to overcome this pandemic.

Thank you once again for raising your concerns with me. I hope you find this reply helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Chris Heaton-Harris MP

Minister of State for Transport