

## LETTER FOR SOMEONE THROWN OFF A PLANE FOR BEING MASK EXEMPT

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you regarding a deeply distressing and law-contravening episode I experienced on your airlines last month,

On [date], my husband and I attempted to board our flight [number] from [city name] to [city name].

My husband and I are both legally exempt from wearing masks, as we have asthma, a respiratory illness which requires our airways remain clear and unobscured at all times. We checked in our bags at the airport, passed through security and duty free, and boarded the plane without masks, and were not challenged or confronted by anyone, as we would expect not to be (the law clearly states those who are mask-exempt should not be interrogated or asked to provide "proof"). Upon boarding the plane, we were warmly greeted by cabin crew who did not comment on our mask-less appearance.

However, once boarding was complete and we had been seated, a member of the crew approached us to instruct us to put our masks on. We explained that we have medical exemptions, and as per the UK government's website, the mask-exempt are not required to provide any formal evidence of this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

We even showed the cabin crew our inhalers, something we are not legally required to do. However, they declared this was not sufficient, and we must show doctors' letters. Not only is this not a legal requirement, but doctors themselves have publicly stated they will not be providing such letters:

<https://www.burtondocs.co.uk/2020/07/21/face-mask-exemption-letters-no-gp-medical-letter-needed/>

I showed the cabin crew the evidence of doctors declaring they will not provide exemption letters, but I was informed this was still insufficient.

Despite all the irrefutable and legally-binding facts presented to them, the cabin crew continued to insist we wore masks. By now in a desperate situation - we could not afford to miss our flight - we politely agreed we would wear them, and endure the consequences. However, the crew declared even this was not good enough, at which point they called the dispatcher and then the police, who escorted us off the plane. As we were leaving, the cabin crew turned their badges over so we couldn't see their names, but I have recorded the episode on video, so they are identifiable.

Having now missed our flight, we were in an extremely distressing situation. Not only the shock and trauma of having been escorted from an aeroplane by the police as if we were criminals, after being forced to disclose sensitive and personal medical information to strangers, but we were now in a very grave and dangerous predicament, as there were no more flights to [destination] for three more days, and I was running low on my life-saving medication. Renewing my prescription was one of the reasons we were taking the flight.

We managed to book the flight for the [date], three days later, and were made to pay an additional £100 each for this. Very thankfully, I managed to make my medication last until then, but had I not - had the plane been delayed or cancelled - I do not know what I would have done.

My husband and I remain deeply shocked and dismayed to have had this horrendous experience with [airline], a company we previously held in high esteem and patronised frequently, including taking flights without masks, as we had done with no difficulty in the past.

It concerns us very profoundly that certain members of the [airline] team have clearly "gone rogue", openly flouting the law, discriminating against the disabled, and misusing police powers. We made it abundantly and irrefutably clear to the [airline] cabin crew what the law surrounding mask exemptions was, but to no avail. Instead of being treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, we were interrogated, discriminated against, treated as criminals, and - more than simply being "inconvenienced" - this intensely traumatic and law-breaking activity from [airline] actually put my life at risk.

What I expect from you is a thorough investigation into this incident, determining exactly how it happened and who was at fault, followed by a comprehensive review of [airline's] staff training policies, in particular reference to disabilities discrimination. Please note that under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disabilities Discrimination Act, the behaviour of [airline's] staff in terms of demanding details of a hidden disability was illegal, carrying with it a potential fine of up to £5,000 and punitive damages of between £900 and £9,000.

I also expect to be compensated for the trauma, distress, and inconvenience we experienced, as well as for the additional £200 my husband and I were forced to spend to rebook flights.

I look forward to hearing from you and expect a response within 14 days of today's date.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]