

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conference Via Zoom

Meeting date: 17 July 2020

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Ross Davies – Deputy Clerk

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Petitions@senedd.wales

In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on www.senedd.tv

- 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest
(Pages 1 – 47)
- 2 New COVID–19 Petitions
 - 2.1 P–05–975 Reconsider second home council tax uplift while illegal to travel to second homes
(Pages 48 – 60)
 - 2.2 P–05–976 Permit weddings of 5 people (registrar/couple/2 witnesses) during COVID 19 in Wales
(Pages 61 – 67)
 - 2.3 P–05–977 Re–open full general dental services in Wales as has happened in England
(Pages 68 – 72)
 - 2.4 P–05–978 Allow Zoos and Wildlife attractions to reopen with social distancing in place throughout Wales
(Page 73)



2.5 P-05-979 Adopt the policies of UK government with regard to easing of lockdown rules
(Page 74)

2.6 P-05-980 Extend grants immediately to small businesses outside of Small Business Rates Relief in Wales
(Pages 75 – 77)

The following two items will be considered together (2.7 and 2.8)

2.7 P-05-981 Allow gyms and leisure centres to reopen
(Pages 78 – 82)

2.8 P-05-986 Allow small gyms and personal training spaces to open sooner during COVID restrictions
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2.9 P-05-982 Re-open outdoor tennis courts and training in line with the rest of the UK and Europe
(Page 88)

2.10 P-05-983 Give grant aid to Bed and Breakfast businesses in Wales that pay council tax and not business rates
(Pages 89 – 92)

2.11 P-05-984 Stop discriminatory remote consultations for incinerator applications during the Covid-19 Pandemic
(Pages 93 – 98)

2.12 P-05-985 Provide key-worker childcare equivalent to what was available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic
(Pages 99 – 107)

2.13 P-05-988 Give key worker children equal access to their schools and teachers
(Pages 108 – 117)

2.14 P-05-990 Open schools in September. Scrap blended learning
(Pages 118 – 120)

3 Other new petitions

- 3.1 P-05-954 Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island

(Pages 121 – 143)

4 Updates to previous petitions

Education

- 4.1 P-05-931 Sun cream in schools

(Page 144)

- 4.2 P-05-958 Recent Decisions Regarding AS Grades 2020

(Pages 145 – 149)

- 4.3 P-05-962 An emergency amendment to extend age of entitlement to additional educational support from 25 to 26 and to define within Government guidance the Covid 19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance

(Pages 150 – 152)

Health and Social Services

- 4.4 P-05-906 Save Sam Davies Ward at Barry Hospital

(Pages 153 – 160)

- 4.5 P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled

(Pages 161 – 168)

- 4.6 P-05-926 To Provide a Chronic Fatigue Department in Wales

(Pages 169 – 180)

- 4.7 P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19

(Pages 181 – 184)

4.8 P-05-964 Extend covid-19 financial support and paid leave to vulnerable and pregnant NHS wales bank workers

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Economy and Transport

4.9 P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent

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4.10 P-05-955 Objection to proposal by Costain to implement Option B in the rerouting of the A465 at Brynmawr

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4.11 P-05-968 Pay Coronavirus grants to all businesses eligible for Small Business Rate Relief same as rest of UK

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4.12 P-05-973 Reopen barbers and hairdressers as long as they have strict social distancing measures in place

(Pages 196 – 197)

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-975 Reconsider second home council tax uplift while illegal to travel to second homes

This petition was submitted by Ann Cooke having collected a total of 68 signatures.

Text of Petition

Second home owners in Pembrokeshire are charged a 50% uplift on their council tax. During the Coronavirus outbreak it is illegal to travel to a second home, and therefore the homes cannot be used. This is an acceptable decision , as it reduces the potential of overwhelming rural health services. It seems only fair that, at the very least, the uplift of council tax is removed during the time that the police will fine anyone travelling to a second home.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Reconsider second home council tax uplift while illegal to travel to second homes

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Gorffennaf 2020
Petitions Committee | 17 July 2020

Reference: RS20/12961-4

Petition Number: P-05-975

Petition title: Reconsider second home council tax uplift while illegal to travel to second homes.

Text of petition: Second home owners in Pembrokeshire are charged a 50% uplift on their council tax. During the Coronavirus outbreak it is illegal to travel to a second home, and therefore the homes cannot be used. This is an acceptable decision, as it reduces the potential of overwhelming rural health services. It seems only fair that, at the very least, the uplift of council tax is removed during the time that the police will fine anyone travelling to a second home.



1. Background

Council Tax Premiums

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ('the 1992 Act') to allow local authorities in Wales to charge higher rates of council tax in respect of long-term empty dwellings (that have been empty for at least a year) and dwellings occupied periodically, more commonly known as second homes.

This additional Council Tax is referred to as a premium. The maximum increase a local authority can charge is an **additional 100%** of the standard council tax charge, i.e. a 100% council tax premium. This means second home owners could be charged up to double the standard rate of Council Tax for that dwelling by the authority.

On the first occasion a local authority chooses to charge such a premium, it must make its determination at least one year before the beginning of the financial year in which the premium will be charged. Local authorities have had the ability to charge a premium since April 2017.

The Welsh Government has issued guidance to local authorities on use of these powers.

Exempt properties

A Council Tax premium can not be charged on a property that is either not banded for Council Tax purposes, exempt from Council Tax entirely, or where Welsh Ministers have specifically said no premium may be charged.

The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 prescribes seven classes of dwellings where no premium may be charged. These include exceptions for occupied caravan pitches (where they are currently empty, but when occupied will be a person's sole or main residence) and also for seasonal homes where year round occupation is not permitted. That exception is applicable to dwellings that are subject to planning conditions that prevent occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any 12-month period.

Providing certain conditions are met, some second home owners could be liable for business rates, rather than Council Tax. In those cases, the Council Tax premium for second homes could not be charged.

Reducing Liability for the Council Tax Premiums on Long-Term Empty and Second Homes

Just as local authorities have discretionary powers to charge premiums on the standard rate of council tax on certain properties, they also have discretionary powers to reduce premiums.

Section 13A of the 1992 Act gives local authorities powers to reduce council tax liability 'to such extent as it thinks fit'. The Welsh Government's guidance states that this power 'may be used to reduce council tax liability in circumstance where a local authority may otherwise charge a premium'.

However, the Welsh Government make clear in the guidance that '**it is a matter for a local authority** as to whether the discretionary 13A powers are used to reduce council tax liability in respect of a premium'. The guidance goes on to note that local authority deliberations around the discretionary powers in 13A will likely be different when 'considering reducing liabilities resulting from a premium compared to reducing liability from the standard rate of council tax'.

2. Welsh Government and Senedd action

Towards the beginning of the lockdown (1 April 2020), Joyce Watson MS tabled a question for the Welsh Ministers on this matter: In light of current advice for people to remain in their primary residence, has the Minister had discussions with local government regarding council tax charges for second home owners?

The response from the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd stated that:

The powers for local authorities to apply council tax premiums to second homes are discretionary. It is for individual authorities to determine whether to apply a premium and the level at which this will apply.

Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers prohibited non-essential travel in Wales. This included travelling to second homes.

Responding to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd emphasised again that the matter of council tax premiums is a matter for local authorities, stating:

The decision to apply a premium, and the level at which to apply it, sits with each local authority enabling them to take account of their

community needs and circumstances. Local authorities also have discretionary powers to apply discounts to the council tax bills for second homes and empty properties.

The response continues by noting that the introduction of premium was not a 'revenue-raising measure', but to bring empty and underused homes 'back into use' to help manage local housing supply.

The Minister also states that the Welsh Government has '**no plans to alter the discretionary nature of these powers**'.

3. Local authority action

It is for local authorities to determine whether or not to charge a premium in their area. A number of authorities charge an additional 25-50% premium to second homes in their area, with some charging the maximum 100% premium. However, some authorities do not charge any premium at all.

Some local authorities have provided updates on their website in relation to the premium in response to Covid-19. [Ceredigion County Council](#) and Pembrokeshire County Council for example state that there is **no change** to the Council Tax Premium currently charged on second home owners as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

[Pembrokeshire council's website](#) notes the following on the matter:

The Authority has faced criticism from some second home owners who claim the extra charge should not be levied as they are unable to use their properties in Pembrokeshire because of the coronavirus travelling restrictions

But the Council say that the Covid-19 outbreak has **no bearing** on the reason for introducing the premium in the first place three years ago.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-975
Ein cyf/Our ref: RE/00403/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

29 June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter regarding Petition P-05-975 on council tax premiums and second homes.

The application of council tax premiums is a matter for individual local authorities. Local authorities in Wales have discretionary powers, under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to apply premiums of up to 100% to the council tax bills for second homes and long-term empty properties. The decision to apply a premium, and the level at which to apply it, sits with each local authority enabling them to take account of their community needs and circumstances. Local authorities also have discretionary powers to apply discounts to the council tax bills for second homes and empty properties.

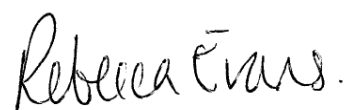
The powers to apply council tax premiums on second homes and long-term empty dwellings were introduced as a tool to help local authorities in Wales in bringing underused homes back into use and in managing issues affecting local housing supply. They were not introduced as a revenue-raising measure. The Welsh Government has no plans to alter the discretionary nature of these powers.

Local authorities in Wales also have powers to reduce council tax bills for households experiencing hardship. We are working with them to consider what support they can offer during this difficult time to ease the financial strains being faced by people across the country. Anyone experiencing difficulty in paying their council tax bill should check whether they might be eligible for support and contact their local authority. Our website provides information on the range of support available: <https://gov.wales/pay-less-council-tax>

The restrictions on movement which have been put in place in response to the coronavirus pandemic are an important part of our approach to controlling the spread of the virus in Wales.

We keep these restrictions under continuous review and will continue to announce easements as and when the evidence indicates that it is safe to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

P-05-975 Reconsider second home council tax uplift while illegal to travel to second homes, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 05.07.20

Submission:

The Welsh Government, totally appropriately, asked second home owners not to use their second homes from March to July.

This was to avoid the risk of increasing transmission of coronavirus, and to reduce the risk of overwhelming local NHS facilities, should there be an increase of patients with Covid-19. This was the correct decision, and second home owners have respected that.

It was illegal to travel more than five miles away from your home in Wales. People were turned back by the police, and some I understand it were fined and possible prosecution discussed. The five mile travel rule was also a totally reasonable action by the Welsh Government, again in order to contain and manage this pandemic.

Making it illegal to travel to a second home effectively made it illegal to use a second home. It is unlikely that a second home owner would live within 5 miles of their second home.

In those months when second home owners could not visit, they were required to continue to pay the 50% uplift on council tax. Councils need base level council tax to maintain all their services. This petition is not about the cessation of council tax payments for that period but for consideration of the 50% uplift, at a time when owners simply could not use their second homes.

I would ask the Petitions Committee to consider whether the fact that it was illegal to travel to your second home effectively made it illegal to use your second home.

General Comments and Observations:

The monies from the uplift were intended, as from the correspondence from Rebecca Evans AS/MS, to address issues around local housing supply and bringing unused homes back into supply, and not as a revenue raising measure (in your notes). I have no issue with that approach and concur with the need to support an increase in social housing through the whole of Wales.

Pembrokeshire County Council uses 50% of the uplift (Appendix 1) to aid with local housing, and the other 50% to enhance community activities through the Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant.(Appendix 2) . Local societies and organisations bid for this money annually. For this round into 2020 this is £974,950. The projects are varied, and range from supporting community booklets to refurbishing buildings for multipurpose use, and indeed repairing

broken fences. The suggestion is that because of the volume of second homes the community is adversely affected, and the community should be “compensated”. The issues that are addressed are issues that are common to communities country wide – rural isolation, and broken fences exist throughout Wales.

How this money is used is possibly irrelevant to this petition, but for second home owners who are unable to use their properties, it has been interesting to read about exactly how this money is used.

Pembrokeshire is ranked 8th in Wales for average house prices in Wales,(appendix 3) despite the perception that second home owners push up property prices. Locals sell their houses at a premium, and contribute to the increasing costs for local people. However key workers in Pembrokeshire are paid the same as key workers in the Vales of Glamorgan, but property on average in Pembrokeshire remains much less expensive in Pembrokeshire than in the Vale, and six other counties in Wales, so Pembrokeshire remains much more affordable than many other areas of Wales

There are numbers of affordable properties empty in Pembrokeshire.

It is entirely likely that second home owners will increase their philanthropy in the direction of Pembrokeshire if, as a matter of principle, the 50% uplift is reconsidered for this period.

[Appendix 1](#)

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Authority says second home Council Tax premium will stay

Newsroom

Authority says second home Council Tax premium will stay



Pembrokeshire County Council has justified its decision to continue to charge a 50 per cent Council Tax premium on second homes.

The Authority has faced criticism from some second home owners who claim the extra charge should not be levied as they are unable to use their properties in Pembrokeshire because of the coronavirus travelling restrictions.

But the Council say that the Covid-19 outbreak has no bearing on the reason for introducing the premium in the first place three years ago.

“It was brought in simply to help increase the supply of affordable homes, particularly in our rural areas” said the Council Cabinet Member for Finance, Bob Kilmister.

“It is a fact that second homes can reduce the amount of housing available for local people. A holiday home in a village can mean one less property available for occupation by

a local family. That we are in the middle of this terrible pandemic does not alter that.”

There are around 3,600 second homes in Pembrokeshire.

Councillor Kilmister also pointed out that the extra cash generated by the Council Tax premium was being put to good use.

“Half of the proceeds go towards the provision of affordable housing and the remainder funds the Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant which gives money to help pay for community projects” he explained.

“To date we have paid out in excess of half a million pounds to scores of local projects which are making a huge difference in the day-to-day life of our communities.”

“Without the 50 per cent Council Tax premium, that money would not be forthcoming.”

Council Tax is collected on domestic properties and the money is raised to part-fund local services, such as the local authority, the police, and town and community councils.

Prior to the premium being introduced, the Authority’s policy was not to award any discounts to owners of second homes and they were liable for 100 per cent Council Tax, namely the standard rate.

The powers to apply council tax premiums on second homes and long-term empty dwellings were introduced as a tool to help local authorities in Wales in bringing underused homes back into use and in managing issues affecting local housing supply. They were not introduced as a revenue-raising measure. The Welsh Government has no plans to alter the discretionary nature of these powers.

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Appendix 2

The Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant

The Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant, using funds raised via the Second Homes Tax is available to provide funding for new projects that help address the negative impact of second homes and in doing so adds value to our communities.

Outcomes are structured around five Well-being objectives:

- Raising overall standards of achievement
 - Healthy communities: Communities supported by affordable and appropriate housing; improving social care
 - Increase the economy's productivity and address regeneration issues
 - Safeguarding our environment
 - Self-sustained and vibrant communities
-
- Appendix 3
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-house-price-index-wales-january-2019/uk-house-price-index-wales-january-2019>

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-976 Permit weddings of 5 people (registrar/couple/2 witnesses) during COVID 19 in Wales

This petition was submitted by Brianni Townsend having collected a total of 979 signatures.

Text of Petition:

While wedding parties are understandably postponed for social distancing reasons, being able to get legally married is important to many, and is achievable without significant risk of spreading COVID-19.

Marriage provides legal rights for inheritance, children, next of kin medical decisions and housing. In addition, due to spiritual and moral convictions regarding cohabiting before marriage, many engaged couples are being forced to live separately as their wedding date passes by.

Additional Information:

Allowing couples the opportunity to provide these rights to each other will help them during this stressful time.

Plans have been reported by BBC News in regards to "small outdoor weddings" to be permitted in Northern Ireland from 8 June, 2020.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52809997>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Permit weddings of 5 people during Covid-19 in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Gorffennaf 2020
Petitions Committee | 17 July 2020

Reference: RS20/12961-5

Petition Number: P-05-976

Petition title: Permit weddings of 5 people (registrar/couple/2 witnesses) during COVID 19 in Wales.

Text of petition: While wedding parties are understandably postponed for social distancing reasons, being able to get legally married is important to many, and is achievable without significant risk of spreading COVID-19.

Marriage provides legal rights for inheritance, children, next of kin medical decisions and housing. In addition, due to spiritual and moral convictions regarding cohabiting before marriage, many engaged couples are being forced to live separately as their wedding date passes by.

Allowing couples the opportunity to provide these rights to each other will help them during this stressful time.

Plans have been reported by BBC News in regards to "small outdoor weddings" to be permitted in Northern Ireland from 8 June, 2020.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52809997>



1. Welsh Government action

On 19 June 2020, the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS announced the latest easing of restrictions that had been placed on the movement and gathering of people in Wales in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 6) Regulations 2020, laid before Senedd Cymru on 22 June 2020, amends the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) 2020 (as amended). The latest regulations, as described in the Explanatory Notes, **remove limitations on marriage and civil partnership ceremonies taking place**, subject to physical distancing requirements.

However, the Regulations, as amended, only refers to marriage and civil partnership ceremonies in the context of ‘places of worship’. The Welsh Government’s guidance on reopening places of worship states that:

The term “place of worship” is not defined in the Regulations. For the purposes of this guidance, the term includes a confined or enclosed space, within buildings or outdoors, which is used for religious ceremonies, collective prayer and worship or similar gatherings, such as a church, gurdwara, mosque, temple, synagogue, prayer, meeting or church hall.

Neither the Regulations nor guidance provide clarity on the status of registry offices, although there are examples of some local authorities now providing registrar services for marriages and civil partnerships in Wales.

The Regulations

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 made provision for restricting the movement of individuals and gatherings during the emergency period. It also provided for restrictions on places of worship, businesses and other specific services. As a result, it was no longer possible to conduct the solemnization of marriages or civil partnership ceremonies in Wales.

The previous set of Regulations, the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 1 June 2020, made exceptions to the provisions imposing restrictions on marriages and

civil partnerships, by allowing this to happen when one of the couple had a terminal illness.

The latest amendments to the regulations amend Regulation 7, 8 and 8B of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(Wales\) 2020](#) (as amended):

- Regulation 7: is amended to permit places of worship, subject to physical distancing requirements of 2 metres is maintained between every person, to open for the **solemnization of a marriage or formation of a civil partnership**;
- Regulation 8: now permits, as a **reasonable excuse**, individuals to leave the place they are living to attend a solemnization of a marriage or civil partnership ceremony;
- Regulation 8B: was inserted by the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(No.5\) Regulations 2020](#). This regulation eased some of the restrictions on gathering outdoors with other persons, which included permitting gathering outdoors to attend a funeral. The latest regulations (No.6) amend the exceptions to include **attending a marriage or formation of a civil partnership**.

Further information on the regulations can be found on the [Welsh Government's website](#).

The next review of the rules will take place on 09 July 2020.

2. Background

All wedding and civil partnership ceremonies were halted as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The restrictions on gatherings and the movement of people, along with the closure of venues and services associated with administering weddings meant that ceremonies could no longer be held in Wales.

On [23 March 2020](#), the [First Minister](#), Mark Drakeford MS announced “all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, as well as gatherings of more than two people in public should not take place”. The only exception to this was the recognition of the need to attend funerals in certain circumstances. As such, funerals could be attended by close family members. However, most local authorities set limits on the number of attendees to a funeral (usually 5 or

10). These limits were applied to ensure the safety of staff members and officiants, as well as to suppress the virus.

However, the key legal requirement for funerals, as stated in the [guidance](#), is that ‘**all reasonable measures** are taken to ensure a **distance of 2 metres** is kept between those attending. This means a distance of 2 metres between members of different households, not necessarily between each individual person.’

Nevertheless, while such exemptions were provided for funerals, these did not extend to marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. In addition, since the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020, the vast majority of business and licenced venues that may have accommodated a wedding have been required to close. This includes approved venues such as hotels, as well as registrar offices. Local authorities suspended all weddings and civil partnership services until further notice.

On 29 May 2020, the First Minister announced some easing of restrictions in Wales, but this did not extend to holding marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. The only exception to this restriction was when one of the couple had a terminal illness.

Registrar services

Registrar services are delivered by local authorities, who will interpret and apply the Regulations and guidance in relation to their own area and service provision. All local authorities have temporarily changed or suspended registrar services for the purpose of conducting marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. However, there are signs that some authorities are now providing registrar services, with [BBC Wales reporting \(1 July 2020\)](#) on the wedding of a couple in north Wales where a registrar was in attendance for the church wedding.

In another recent [BBC Wales News article \(16 June 2020\)](#), it was reported that the majority of councils in Wales now have ‘personal protective equipment ready to be used by registrars, while ceremony rooms have been rearranged to allow for social distancing’. It was also reported that some councils are reviewing the possibility of streaming ceremonies online in the future.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On [2 June 2020](#), [Nick Ramsay MS submitted a written question](#) to the Minister for Health and Social Services: ‘Will the Minister explain on what basis it has been

deemed acceptable for funerals to proceed with limited numbers in attendance, from a public health perspective, and why the same guidance has not been applied to wedding ceremonies?’

The Minister has yet to provide a response.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/03891/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

14 July 2020

Dear Janet,

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 were amended (effective 22 June) to allow places of worship to open for the purposes of solemnisation of marriage and the formation of civil partnership and for participants and invited guests to travel, gather and enter a building for that purpose. This means that it is now possible to conduct ceremonies in places of worship and Register Offices.

Other venues which commonly conduct weddings are not able to conduct ceremonies as they are required to remain closed under the current regulations. This change to the Regulations reflects the points you raise about the importance of being able to marry or form a civil partnership for legal and spiritual reasons. It means that all those who wish to, have an avenue to marriage or civil partnership in a faith or non-faith setting.

We have been working with Registrars and the faith community to develop guidance which we will publish shortly. This guidance will stress the distinction between the formal ceremony which establishes the legal basis of the marriage or civil partnership and the social gathering which many wish to enjoy as part of their wedding. Public health considerations do not allow us to go further and allow the social gathering to take place at this stage, so the dispensation will allow limited events with social distancing measures at their core.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

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CF99 1SN

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-977 Re-open full general dental services in Wales as has happened in England

This petition was submitted by Andrew Bartley having collected a total of 7,583 signatures.

Text of Petition:

On March 23rd general dental services were closed for all except advice, antibiotics, pain killers and simple extractions.

On June 8th 2020 English practices were allowed to re open and the level of service was based on their ability to comply with safe operating protocols.

Welsh patients and dentists are denied this opportunity, with estimated "normal" service in January 2021

Patients are being denied access to appropriate treatment in Wales. This is discrimination and must stop.

Additional Information:

Dental practices can and will be as safe as possible. They are also huge financial strain which may result in many having to close resulting in even worse access issues.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/04075/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair,
Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament

7 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your email of 15 June regarding the petition P-05-977 to re-open full general dental services in Wales in line with dental practices in England.

Following the announcement in England that dental practices would be open for the first time from 8 June there has been significant interest in dentistry and the resulting media coverage has not fully conveyed the accurate position regarding dental services in Wales.

Unlike in England, throughout this pandemic, dentists in Wales have been 'open' and able to see patients face to face in their practices when necessary for urgent care although routine non-urgent dentistry is not being provided for the time being. Like all other countries in the UK we also established 15 urgent dental centres to treat emergency and urgent cases requiring more complex treatment.

I do not accept the notion that Wales is somehow lagging behind England in the reopening of services. During the pandemic dentists and their teams have seen more than 16,000 people in practice and provided over 175,000 consultations remotely, via phone or video services. In addition the urgent dental centres have provided treatment to some 7,000 people.

It is a priority that our plan for the reinstatement of services must be cautious and gradual in line with the Welsh Government's approach to easing lockdown. We do not take a lead from England, with our position in Wales being one of implementing a safe, phased, risk-based re-establishment of dental services. There is a need to balance the oral health needs of patients against the requirement that we must continue to consider the wider context of Covid-19 to reduce the risk of community transmission in order to protect patients, dental teams and the wider community.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

On 22 May the Chief Dental Officer of Wales published the De-escalation Plan for Dentistry which set out a phased re-establishment of dental services to meet population needs. On 10 June we then published the All-Wales Standard Operating Process (SOP) which was issued to all dental practices as part of the recovery plan for dentistry in Wales. This set out the resumption of dental services with plans for the first phase of de-escalation coming into effect from 1 July when more dental practices in Wales would be able to start to introduce additional treatments and a wider range of care.

All along our plans for the restoration of dental services have been kept under review to ensure that dentistry is allied with the recovery plans for other areas of primary care and wider services.

Aligned with the First Minister's announcement on 19 June on the further easing of lockdown measures, we lifted the Red alert in dentistry in Wales from Monday 22 June. Dental services can now move to the Amber phase of de-escalation. The majority of practices and health boards are likely to still need and want the time available before 1 July to prepare, and we fully support that requirement. However, dental practices who are ready to do so can open more fully and relax the criteria for urgent care assessment, to see and treat more of their patients ahead of the earlier planned date of 1 July.

The timing of the stages will continue to be kept under review. The return of services will be gradual and we have acknowledged capacity for dental care in some practices will be limited by physical measures and the availability of appropriate PPE (and fit testing). We need dental practices to continue to follow strict infection control measures, including social distancing, to protect practice staff, patients and the wider community. The approach we are taking proposes to deliver dental services for those most in need, with the treatments provided increasing as the Covid-19 risk reduces.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-05-977 Re-open full general dental services in Wales as has happened in England, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 07.07.20

Fortunately, we do appear now FINALLY to moving in a positive direction.

I do have a comment to Mr Gethings view that practices have been "open and able to see face to face patients".

This is in my opinion a little disingenuous.

Technically yes, they/we could physically open.

However, we were only able to offer extractions as an interventional treatment.

This is akin to allowing Tesco to "open" but only permitting the sale of bottled water. They may well be open but you cannot buy much of value.

Treatment options to actually prevent conditions worsening and conservative pain relief options were not permissible

The UDCs were only able to offer (in the main barring some exceptions) dressings to inflamed nerves for front teeth and latterly premolar teeth.

This again denied access to conservative pain relief measures to back teeth.

I appreciate the political answer is all dental practices were open but the reality of the situation was rather different to that promoted by Mr Gething. I have been a dentist for quite some time now and as such I can safely say most of my patients are NOT happy to only be offered an extraction.

Regards lagging behind England. Well we were and indeed are lagging.

England were offered a complete return to NHS and private practices alike (and mixed who in reality equate to a majority) a couple of weeks before Wales. This was extended to all practices who were able to meet SOPs.

In Wales we were delayed in offering this return to a wider range of treatment options; causing our patients to have to wait longer and meaning we were further behind England in accessing essential PPE and RPE to allow safe opening. So, we were disadvantaged.

We now are able to offer more to our patients thankfully.

However, with regards to NHS dentistry we in Wales still have a phased return as we are in "Amber". This means we cannot return to routine dentistry even if safely able to do so. This is not the case in England where they are only restricted by the ability of the practice to conform with guidance.

There ARE differences with England.

As we gradually emerge from this and help our patients more. I would urge the committee to avoid this situation happening in the future.

Wales appears to have some of the most stringent restrictions applied to dentistry. Although like England we also have a 1-hour fallow time for our surgeries in place which has limited evidence to support its use.

We CAN and ARE able to operate safely. To my knowledge there have been no documented cases of transmission between patients and dental staff or vice versa.

During the height of the pandemic in Wales the UDCs operated safely and again with no transmission. Their protocols of operation are the same as those recommended for general practice.

NHS services must indeed support the practices as the funding mechanism is not able to manage such reduced throughput of patients and loss of charge revenue.

But NHS and private alike, If we are able to source and implement the appropriate protocols we must be able to continue to help our patients free of the threat of closure and referral to governing bodies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-978 Allow Zoos and Wildlife attractions to reopen with social distancing in place throughout Wales

This petition was submitted by Susan Stuart having collected a total of 248 signatures.

Text of Petition:

It is essential that zoos and wildlife attractions with their acres of land and wide open spaces are given immediate permission to reopen. With social distancing in place these facilities could be safer than other facilities, such as open air markets, already given permission to reopen.

Additional Information:

Zoos play a vital role in conservation, not only in Wales, but also around the world. Institutions spend millions annually funding conservation that helps to preserve the habitats and numbers of critically endangered animals.

This conservation has been put under threat by the continued closure of zoos, with many facing closure due to the lack of government support.

The cost of looking after animals doesn't just disappear when visitors aren't around and it is essential they be allowed to reopen immediately.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Llanelli
- Mid and West Wales

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-979 Adopt the policies of UK government with regard to easing of lockdown rules

This petition was submitted by Georgina Stanger having collected a total of 96 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Many Welsh people feel that they are being unfairly kept in lockdown at a time when people living in England are being given more freedom. They are also worried about their jobs and small businesses and feel that the stance taken by the Welsh government will hinder central government's attempts to unlock the economy.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-980 Extend grants immediately to small businesses outside of Small Business Rates Relief in Wales

This petition was submitted by Paul Deverson having collected a total of 130 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Give local authorities discretion to award small business rates relief grant to businesses who pay rates through their rent, giving them the same support as all other businesses.

Additional Information:

The English Conservative Government released that businesses whose rates were collected through rent were being failed so they addressed it by giving local authorities discretion to award the grant and help save them. So far the Welsh Labour Government refuse to do this.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-980
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00429/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

10 July 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter in your role as Chair of the Petitions Committee about non-domestic rates grant support for businesses.

The Welsh Government is providing £1.7 billion of support to help businesses in Wales during the coronavirus outbreak. The package includes more than £350m to help businesses with their non-domestic rates bills during this financial year. Alongside this extra rates relief, over £875m is available for a non-domestic rates related grant scheme for businesses and not-for-profit organisations.

In Wales, the Economic Resilience Fund which was launched on 30 March has provided additional support to businesses which do not qualify for non-domestic rates related grants, as well as providing a range of other business support. The Fund supports firms of all sizes, with a focus on those that have not benefited from the rates relief and coronavirus grants. This support was in place prior to the UK Government's announcement of the local authority discretionary fund.

Phase 2 of the Economic Resilience Fund was announced on 22 May. It will enable access to the remaining £100m of the £300m already approved and allocated to support micro-businesses, small and medium enterprises, and large businesses. Limited companies which are not VAT registered will now also be able to access the Fund.

In the meantime, we are calling on the UK Government to go further with its support and provide the vital funding Welsh businesses need to survive and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

We have reprioritised budgets to create the most generous business support offer in the UK to support sustainable businesses and the jobs they provide. The £1.7bn package we have

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Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

allocated goes beyond the related funding we have received from the UK Government to maximise the support we can offer during this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-981 Allow gyms and leisure centres to reopen

This petition was submitted by Kirsty Stevenson having collected a total of 964 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The goal is to get the government to rethink their decision to close gyms and leisure centres, and to come to an agreement to reopen them. Many people utilise such facilities for mental health and wellbeing purposes and it would be beneficial to reopen in a controlled manner.

Additional Information:

There are processes that can be put in place to ensure distancing and hygiene policies are adhered to, and can be done in a safer and more manageable way than current shops that are open and most certainly more manageable than the 'non essential' shops' that are being considered.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-981
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/01209/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

25 June 2020

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders MS,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 June, regarding Petition P-05-981 to allow gyms and leisure centres to reopen.

Under the current guidelines, fitness studios, gyms, swimming pools or other indoor leisure centres are listed as premises which must remain closed. However, one-to-one personal training and coaching is allowed, provided it takes place outdoors and all current social distancing and hygiene measures are observed.

We are learning more about the virus every day and we know the risk of transmission is lower outdoors than indoors and that's why we were able to ease the restrictions following the last review, on 18 June, to allow most outdoor facilities to re-open. However, a lower risk doesn't mean no risk. Even in these circumstances it is vital we all maintain social distancing so we can continue to tackle the spread of this virus.

We continue to discuss the return of sport and exercise with our partners and stakeholders in the sector, and local authorities and leisure trusts are key members of the groups that have been established to bring forward proposals for each review of the coronavirus regulations.

Yours sincerely,

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**P-05-981 Allow gyms and leisure centres to reopen, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 07.07.20**

P-05-981 Pwyllgor Deisebau 17.07.20 / Petitions Committee 17.07.20

Whilst I appreciate that the provision for one to one coaching and personal training is allowed if it takes place outdoors, this only covers a small amount of the population who have the privilege of being able to train in this kind of way. Whilst I also understand the risk of the virus and transmission is not 100% understood, or transmission being risk free in any environment, it doesn't appear to be logical to allow large non-essential shops, fast food premises and now pubs and restaurants with outdoor areas to open and easily managed training facilities to not.

From visiting small essential shops, it is apparent that the necessary processes and practices are not being adhered to by the public or enforced by store owners in the slightest; the outside queuing systems are the only form of adherence to the rules there is. With the risk of transmission being thought to be higher and increased indoors, the risk of spending a possibly unlimited time in a store or outside area in relative close proximity to other people, and in a lot of cases surrounded by people, seems a higher risk than training indoors (with possible increased ventilation), for a limited time with increased distancing and sanitation measures. Particularly if you compare this to areas where people will be consuming alcohol and likely to lose their inhibitions, thus even more likely to flout and disregard the distancing rules and regulations that should be in place (but rarely enforced by traders/retailers).

Hopefully you'll have seen that Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson has recently called on the First Minister to name a date to reopen such facilities, again because now, as well as non-essential shops and pubs can reopen/have a date to re-open. I can imagine the leisure sector is already suffering, as well as those who can't access facilities that are an essential and vital part of their health and mental wellbeing. From speaking to several gym owners, it appears that with stringent and sensible measures, such as limiting overall membership numbers, increased hygiene and imposing distancing measures they can open and operate safely.

It appears illogical to many that it is deemed safer for people to be allowed to congregate with strangers in shops, restaurants and pubs albeit outdoors and that it is deemed safer than a properly regulated gym/training facility. As Baroness Thompson expressed in her letter, gyms also have the names and addresses of everyone who comes through the door, can limit numbers, move equipment, have sanitation at every station, and there are already very strict rules on ventilation. The same cannot be said for shops, non-essential or otherwise and particularly not for pubs. There's even the case that people are also now able to book haircuts and other beauty treatments, which means coming into extremely close contact for potentially prolonged periods of time – again seemingly higher risk than the measures that can be put in place at training facilities.

As Thompson's recent letter and comments also point out, there is also the 'social value' in losses that could incur should the closure of these facilities carry on. There is also consideration needed for those who are of a particular disadvantage from closures such as the BAME community and those from less socially economic areas who make up the majority of users. It is a shame for such communities to be disproportionately affected by these measures, especially with no end in sight.

There is also the point around lifting the restrictions around fast-food and not consider businesses who help the health and wellbeing of local populations, who have a far greater and positive impact than 'unhealthy' food options that can be argued are a detriment to society.

I understand the cautiousness of allowing areas to open up at once, but it would be useful to have proper consideration of the above, particularly the rationalisation when comparing it to the decisions to open non-essential shops and pubs/restaurants with outdoor areas (and taking into account the recent scenes in the likes of SoHo when pubs were allowed to open), or at the very least, consideration to provide a date when this issue will have a resolution date. Even if consideration is given to the smaller privately-owned gyms initially rather than large leisure centres as these premises can very much easily control members, distancing and sanitation and impose safe spaces for people to train and exercise again.

P-05-981 Allow gyms and leisure centres to reopen, Additional Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 07.07.20

Grateful if you could also take the below into consideration, this information has come following conversations with the private gym I am a member of:

We are keen to open as soon as possible and believe we can do this safely if we follow the safety measures other industries have adopted.

We have already implemented extra measures in addition to our pre-covid high levels of cleanliness.

These measures include:

- * Forehead temperatures taken before entry
- * Members only facility for ease of track and trace
- * Significantly reduced number of members (40% of pre-covid membership)
- * Extra cleaning and sanitising during the day (in addition to our normal cleaning protocols)
- * All windows and doors open for ventilation
- * We have 15 hand sanitising stations throughout gym
- * Gym rules insist that members clean their machines after use using the Antibacterial spray and blue roll provided.
- * Machines are put as 'Out of Use' to adhere to social distancing
- * We have purchased an Electro Static Sanitising Sprayer machine especially for high contact touch points like dumbbells/barbells/kettlebells/etc

The WHO have declared that Covid is not transmitted through sweat. The risk of aerosol transmission will be reduced by reducing the number of people on site at any given time, plus extra cleaning measures and increased ventilation.

Another point gym owners need to consider is the Corona Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). As of August businesses must pay the Employers NI contributions. In September employers must contribute 10% towards staff furlough payment, and 20% in October. Without a date to re-open, gym owners will be thinking of making their staff redundant as they could be in a position where they have no income yet MUST contribute towards the CJRS.

Agenda Item 2.8

P-05-986 Allow small gyms and personal training spaces to open sooner during COVID restrictions

This petition was submitted by Andrew Starling having collected a total of 3,181 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Small gyms or personal training spaces, such as Crossfit gyms, can control members distancing and cleaning better than larger commercial gyms. I propose a safe system of work with 16 square metres (4 by 4) per client, with no movement within the gym out of that space. Thorough cleaning of used equipment and floor space and sufficient downtime between sessions. Temperature checks on arrival. Alternatively, training sessions to be conducted outdoors (such as is already happening in England)

Additional Information:

With current restrictions being lifted and non essential retail and fast food outlets being allowed to open, we as a business invested in the health industry believe it is of far greater good and far lower risk to open this model of gyms than those businesses mentioned above. We are an obvious benefit to overall health as opposed to a detriment, which fast food chains are.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Llanelli
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-986
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/01405/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

8 July 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter dated 25 June, regarding Petition P-05-986 to allow small gyms and training spaces to open.

To allow for the safe return of sport and physical activity, Sport Wales and the Welsh Sports Association have established a number of planning groups at our instigation. The groups, with representatives from the breadth of sporting activity, have been tasked to consider more distinct challenges around the following themes:

- Elite and professional sports;
- Outdoor sports;
- Indoor sports; and
- Sport and Leisure Facilities.

The purpose of each group is to develop an approach for a phased return and consider opportunities that can be presented to the Welsh Government as part of each 21 day review. These groups have also considered the guidance required to support the sector and I am pleased a representative of ukactive has been part of the discussions of the Sport and Leisure Facilities group.

By working together, the sector identified a basic framework for a phased return that was outlined in the Welsh Government's 'Unlocking our Society and Economy' roadmap. The timing and extent of resumed activity across the four themes in the roadmap will vary as we progress through the phases for moving out of lockdown. However, the message is clear: some activities - due to the limitations posed by social distancing - lend themselves to resume earlier than others, and a coordinated approach is required.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

By working together, the groups have played a key role in developing guidance for a phased return to sport, which we published last month. A link to the guidance is set out below and is intended to support the reopening of facilities when the conditions are right.

<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return.html>

We keep all of the restrictions under regular review. We have adopted a step-by-step approach to easing the restrictions and will learn from each step we take to make further changes. So far, we have focused on opening outdoor facilities as the risk of transmission is lower outdoors and many outdoor facilities are now accessible. We are continuing to work closely with the sector to discuss options for safely re-opening further facilities as swiftly and safely as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

P-05-986 Allow small gyms and personal training spaces to open sooner during COVID restrictions, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 12.07.20

Dear Petitions Committee,

I refer to the above petition being discussed on Friday the 17th July 2020.

I'd like to include the email I sent directly to Mark Drakeford, that hasn't received a reply to begin with and then expand from there.

"Hi Mark,

I'm sure you have noticed my tweets and my current petition

<https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/200102>

I'm just reaching out again as you said you were in talks with the gym industry about reopening and the potential of outdoor training.

Crossfit is the biggest group of gyms (we are all affiliated but run independently) in the UK, by some distance. I'd love to open some dialogue and educate the government on how we work, how we can socially distance and how we don't share equipment like a commercial gym.

Now, you may be sitting there thinking this is about income for me and getting the business back open, but you'd be wrong. Owning a CrossFit gym is a labour of love and is about the bigger picture for me. I have another full time job that supports my hobby of owning a CrossFit gym and haven't taken a penny from the gym business since owning it. I can also say that my community of members have all insisted to carry on paying memberships in order to keep the gym afloat so clearly it has nothing to do with that.

We are the ONLY answer to this pandemic. There is heaps of research showing that being overweight or suffering underlying health issues related to to being overweight puts you at a much higher risk of dying from COVID. Yet, you open pubs (outside), fast food chains and non-essential retail first, where if we're all honest, social distancing isn't and will not be happening. We are a solution to the issue. These are causes. Think of us as swimming teachers and the NHS as the lifeguards. You've stopped swimming lessons for a substantial period of time and when the hypothetical swimming pool re-opens, the lifeguards will be overrun. I thought we were trying to save the NHS? This is going to put a huge demand on it with a future pandemic of obesity and obesity-related disease.

COVID-19 will go and there will be a vaccine that will only be effective on COVID-19. What happens when the next, new 'COVID-19' comes along? We spend our lives preparing our bodies to deal with whatever gets thrown our way and I believe that is the only solution. Unfortunately, we are being prevented by your government.

I would also love to read the research you spoke about earlier when you mentioned gyms are a 'coronavirus hotspot'. Is there evidence here to support this? And is it of a high level, I wonder?

I look forward to hearing from you."

I think this sums up the majority of my feelings on the governments response and on their current restrictions in place. Although since it has changed and outdoor fitness classes with up to 30 participants have been allowed, this has slightly altered and so have my views, until finding out that close-contact services including nail and beauty salons and piercing and tattoo businesses will be allowed to open on the 27th July, before indoor gyms. It has also been discussed that indoor hospitality might open from the 3rd August, yet no mention of gyms other than brief discussions with the industry. Again at this point I would like to highlight that CrossFit gyms make up the majority of UK gyms and are nothing to do with UK Active. We operate considerably differently from your average gym, but are not being included in these discussions.

I would also like to add that I am disgusted, disappointed and completely confused as to how the sale of alcohol at a premises has become more important in society than health and fitness. Alcohol, as your health advisors will inform you, is a depressant and probably not the best mix with the current social situation of lockdown. I should probably add that I do love a beer and am probably not the 'fitness freak' you may be imagining. Alcohol is very high in sugar and calories and will lead to many long term underlying health issues and issues with weight, the two largest contributors to death from COVID-19. It also inhibits peoples' behaviour and as you have seen from the scenes in England, has altered everyones perception of social distancing.

I'd further like to reiterate the issue of Mr Drakeford stating that "gyms are emerging as a source of coronavirus infections". This is unsubstantiated nonsense, with absolutely no reasoning or research to support it. In fact, the only research presented so far has confirmed the complete opposite and I do believe a First Minister should be held accountable for false accusations or slander and should be more responsible with his words.

Lastly, I would just like to point out again that in this discussion I have absolutely no financial gain to be made and feel that I may well be the only person who can say this. I am doing this all because I whole heartedly believe in it and know it is the the only way to reduce the effects of chronic disease, from diabetes to coronavirus. I have never taken a penny from the CrossFit business I own.

I thank the petition committee for discussing my petition and for presenting it to the Welsh government.

Many Thanks

Andrew Starling

Petition author, Owner of Crossfit Llanelli, L2 Crossfit Coach

Agenda Item 2.9

P-05-982 Re-open outdoor tennis courts and training in line with the rest of the UK and Europe

This petition was submitted by Georgina Hawkey having collected a total of 214 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Tennis is one of very few sports where social distancing can be embraced and it is an exceptional form of exercise. Making it a pivotal outlet for people to exercise safely throughout coronavirus while, supporting the mental health and physical wellbeing of many young people and adults. Scotland, England and Western Europe have reopened outdoor tennis courts and training. The result indicates that the reopening of outdoor tennis courts in these countries has been successful

Additional Information:

Tennis lends itself to natural social distancing and has proven to be a safe sport in the UK and the rest of Europe. A further delay will cause financial strain on coaches and put Welsh performance players at a significant disadvantage to both their UK and European counterparts. Coaches in England, following set rules have been able to coach safely again allowing them to restart their revenue inflow and transitionally helping them return to normality. An additional delay, will hit performance players one of the hardest. This further delay will put them so far behind players across the UK and Europe in terms of getting back to match fitness and in the future when qualifying for tournaments.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd South
- North Wales

Agenda Item 2.10

P-05-983 Give grant aid to Bed and Breakfast businesses in Wales that pay council tax and not business rates

This petition was submitted by Louise Grice having collected a total of 86 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Some businesses in Wales are not getting any grant help whatsoever. I am in my second year of my business and my first year profits went back into my business. I'm not vat registered or a LTD company and don't employ anyone, no grants available to me. Council tax is classed as a second home. I pay a premium although this is 10m from my home. We haven't had guests since Oct 20. We don't have any indication when we can reopen but still have rent etc to pay. We need help now and the future.

Additional Information:

Business rates payers on second homes are getting a grant of either £10,000 or £25,000 and this may be on properties that are not necessarily used as self catering accommodation. My B&B is my only source of income like most people this income has gone down to nothing.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ynys Môn
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-983
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00433/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

8 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter in your role as Chair of the Petitions Committee about non-domestic rates grant support for businesses.

The Welsh Government will be providing £1.7 billion of support to help businesses in Wales during the Coronavirus outbreak.

The Welsh Government recognises that not all businesses will benefit from the rates relief and grant support being provided. The package has been designed to be affordable within the available funding.

However, the Welsh Government has established a further package of support to help businesses which are not eligible for the rates relief or rates-related business grants. On 30 March, the First Minister announced a £500 million support package to be delivered through our new Economic Resilience Fund (ERF). The Fund supports firms of all sizes, with a focus on those that have not benefited from the rates relief and coronavirus grants.

The ERF eligibility checker re-opened on Tuesday 9 June and the fund is now open for new applications. The eligibility checker can be found at:

<https://fundchecker.businesswales.gov.wales>

The next phase of the Fund will enable businesses to access a further £100m of the ERF. This will be targeted at microbusinesses, SMEs and large businesses of critical economic importance who have yet to receive financial assistance from the ERF.

In the meantime, we are calling on the UK Government to go further with its support and provide the vital funding Welsh businesses need to survive and recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

We have reprioritised budgets to create the most generous business support offer in the UK to support sustainable businesses and the jobs they provide. The £1.7bn package we have

allocated goes beyond the related funding we have received from the UK Government to maximise the support we can offer during this crisis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

P-05-983 Give grant aid to Bed and Breakfast businesses in Wales that pay council tax and not business rates, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 08.07.20

We have been on the eligibility checker for the resilience fund many times and as we don't employ any staff and are not VAT registered we do not qualify for this fund either. Nowhere on any of the checkers does it ask if our income has decreased by 100% which it has.

If we want to reopen in the next week we have to put in place measures to make our building COVID safe. Which we do not have the funding to do.

Money was given to the welsh Assembly from England to cover our kind of business but this was spent elsewhere and big businesses are still getting extra funding where small family run businesses like ours are falling through all of the gaps.

All we want is some help as we find it unfair that our taxes will go up In the future to help repay all of the grants that other people have managed to receive. People with second homes have managed to receive at least £10,000 as they say they are renting it out for a small portion of the year but this is not their main source of income.

Many thanks

Louise Grice

Agenda Item 2.11

P-05-984 Stop discriminatory remote consultations for incinerator applications during the Covid-19 Pandemic

This petition was submitted by Councillor Amanda Jenner having collected a total of 392 signatures.

Text of Petition:

It has been announced that due to COVID-19, an applicant for a large incinerator intends to hold a "remote" planning consultation. Under Developments of National Significance legislation, this is allowed. Due to Covid-19, the County Councillor & Community Council won't be able to hold public or face-to-face meetings with residents. This is a very technical & emotive application. It is unfair/discriminatory on the elderly, disabled & those who are shielding to remotely consult during this period.

Additional Information:

Some elderly residents may not use nor have access to the internet. Some may not feel comfortable taking part in this consultation over the telephone. Incinerator applications are very technical so both the County Councillor & Community Council had intended to hold public meetings to ensure all residents could access, understand & take part in the consultation. The incinerator applicant had also previously indicated that they'd hold a public meeting and 'drop-in' events. This will not be allowed due to Covid-19.

Furthermore, this matter has been in the pipe-line for a number of years. It would not be unreasonable for the Welsh Government Planning Inspectorate to delay this consultation until public and face-to-face meetings are allowed and safe again. This would be in the public interest. It would ensure that elderly residents and those with disabilities or who may be shielding, will have fair access to feed into this consultation should they wish to.

Relates to DNS/3214813

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-984
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/01340/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

23 June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 17 June regarding Petition P-05-984: 'Stop discriminatory remote consultations for incinerator applications during the Covid-19 Pandemic'.

The minimum requirements for consultation relating to Developments of National Significance ("DNS") applications are set out in the DNS (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 and the DNS (Procedure) (Wales) Regulations 2016 ("the DNS procedures").

Prior to applying for planning permission for a DNS, the DNS procedures require prospective applicants to consult specific community and specialist consultees, serve written notice on owners or occupiers of land adjoining the site, display site notices in at least one place on or near the site and place a notice in a local newspaper.

Public meetings or drop in events are not prescribed as minimum requirements in the DNS procedures as it is not proportionate for all applications. As a consequence, there are no grounds to prevent an application for planning permission from being validated where a public meeting or drop-in event cannot be held by the applicant.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

While the above is the case in relation to pre-application consultation, guidance was issued to Local Planning Authorities by the Chief Planner on 27 March to address the situation following submission of a DNS planning application. The guidance acknowledges parties may not be able to respond to requests to submit Local Impact Reports or participate in the consideration of DNS applications, generally, in a timely manner. The DNS procedures enable the Welsh Ministers to extend the timescales associated with any consultation or submission requirement, and the Planning Inspectorate shall exercise those powers appropriately upon request. Where such an extension is granted and likely to take the application beyond the 36 week timescale within which the DNS application must be determined, the Welsh Ministers will suspend the 36 week determination period.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

P-05-984 Stop discriminatory remote consultations for incinerator applications during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 09.07.20

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the email below together with its attachments. I would like to make the following additional comments and respond to some of the points in the Minister's letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee.

1. Firstly, please note that I have been informed by some of my residents that they are aware of other residents/neighbours and family etc, who would have liked to have signed this petition, but who do not have internet access. Due to COVID-19, visiting them to obtain such a signature would have been against government guidance and handing over physical documentation could have put them at risk. This really goes to the heart of why I have brought forward this petition. The fact that many residents do not have access to remote internet systems and that an applicant has decided to hold a 'remote' consultation during this period, is felt by many residents to be extremely unfair.
2. It may be helpful to provide you with some further background which highlights why so many of my residents are concerned about their being a 'remote consultation'.

For a number of years, we have known that a developer is planning to submit a planning application for a large-scale incinerator in our area. Due to the scale of the development, this is considered a "Development of National Significance" and the application will be submitted directly to the Welsh Government Planning Inspectorate, rather than to the Local Planning Authority. The DNS reference for this matter is DNS/3214813. Under the relevant and recently amended legislation, the applicant is allowed to hold their statutory public consultation as a "remote consultation" and the applicant has since announced that it intends to proceed in this way and that they will be consulting using webinars, telephone surgeries and information packs sent out in the post.

If the consultation takes place within the timescales that the incinerator applicant has indicated, then due to the Covid-19 pandemic, neither the Community Council nor myself will be able to hold public meetings, nor have face-to-face meetings with our residents about this matter. Many elderly people in my area are digitally excluded, they may not use, nor have access to the Internet and they may not feel comfortable taking part in a telephone consultation. The nature of this incinerator is highly technical, especially the matters concerning air quality, waste management and the environmental impact. Both the Community Council and I had planned and previously communicated to our residents, that during any consultation we would hold public and face-to face meetings so that we could talk people through the complicated process and documents, and do everything we could to ensure that all residents understand the application and how to make their comments known. Indeed, the incinerator applicant had also previously indicated that they would hold a public meeting and that they would have 'drop-in' events so that people could ask questions and understand the nature of the application. The concern that residents will not be able to meet face-to-face with either their elected representatives nor the applicant to discuss the consultation, adds to the loneliness and isolation that many of them feel already. It leaves many people in my area feeling that they are without a voice.

3. I am grateful to the Minister for the time she has taken to consider this petition and for writing back to the Chair of the Petitions Committee. In the letter the Minister comments that “the DNS procedures enable the Welsh Minister to extend the timetables associated with any consultation or submission requirement” and that “The Planning Inspectorate shall exercise those powers appropriately upon request”. This incinerator application has been in the pipeline for a number of years now; extending the timetable by a period which would allow for public and face-to-face meetings during both the pre-application consultation and the following DNS statutory consultation, would be reasonable and highly appreciated by my residents. I request that the Minister exercises the powers referred to in her letter and that once notice for this consultation is given by the applicant, the Planning Inspectorate allows a rolling extension to the timetable until Welsh Government guidelines allow for public and face-to-face meetings to occur. This would be in the public interest and would ensure that elderly residents, those who may have disabilities and those shielding, would have fair access to feed into this and the subsequent DNS consultation should they wish to.
4. Myself and my residents would be hugely grateful if the Petitions Committee could consider this and highlight to the Minister my request in in paragraph 3 above.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this matter which is of such significance to my residents.

Kind regards,

Amanda

Councillor Amanda Jenner

Agenda Item 2.12

P-05-985 Provide key-worker childcare equivalent to what was available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic

This petition was submitted by Adam Calcutt having collected a total of 719 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, has announced the planned re-opening of schools on 29th June. From Monday 22nd June, the opening hours of school hubs providing childcare for children of key-workers will be reduced, in some areas, from 0800 – 1800 to 0830 – 1600. This will penalise key-workers who are unable to access the levels of childcare available prior the Covid-19 pandemic; key-workers will be unable to fulfil their normal working hours resulting in a detrimental effect on essential services.

Additional Information:

Having provided children of key-workers with childcare between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm failure of the Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament to provide further arrangements for childcare within these hours, or at least equivalent to the hours of care available at individual schools immediately prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, penalises hard working key-workers. Without the immense effort, dedication and sacrifice of these key-workers to maintain essential services throughout the pandemic the effects on the general public and proud nation of Wales would have led to an even greater death toll, appalling hardships and deprivation – the likes of which would and still could entail serious ramifications for our future generations. Access to the level of child care previously available – including, but not limited to breakfast and after-school clubs at the levels of cost paid by the parents pre-Covid-19 – should be the bare minimum.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03229/20
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders MS,

30 June 2020

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June regarding petition P-05-985 to provide childcare equivalent to what was available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share some views on this matter with the Petitions Committee. I understand this is a concern for many families across Wales and the arrangements for the next phase of how schools operate from 29 June will need to strike a balance between the national guidance and local needs and circumstances of communities.

In considering the petition there are a number of matters I will wish to think about in my portfolio area and there are some matters which go beyond my remit that require attention. These include for example the frequently seen role of the wider family including grandparents, and how the social restrictions in place impact on the support network many families come to rely on.

We must recognise that Wales remains in a state of lockdown. Noting the exceptional response from the people in Wales, from families and individuals, from all our services and our critical workers, and the tremendous progress we have made, the coronavirus remains a real threat and will continue to have an impact on our lives for a longer period of time.

In considering the petition we must be live to this. Whilst we continue to tackle the coronavirus and plan for the potential of a second peak, the First Minister is simultaneously making best and cautious use of the headroom available to put in place minor adjustments to ease the social restrictions in place. I think we all welcome those easing measures including most recently the lifting from non-essential retail, places of worship and outdoor activities, however it is very clear this transitional position, neither fully one nor the other, brings a high degree of complexity in the issues we see.

I am sure the authors of the petition recognise this point and I would be glad to see acknowledgement and clarity over whether the petition seeks a return to normal childcare

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

arrangements now, given we remain in a state of lockdown and continue to manage unprecedented circumstances, or at a later date when social restrictions are removed and schools and settings can return to more normal arrangements.

I fully support the petition's praise for the immense effort, dedication and sacrifice of our critical workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Our NHS and social care workers, our supply chains and essential services, our emergency services, and our teachers and school staff have played a key role as critical workers in reducing the impact of the pandemic, safeguarding against loss of life and avoiding the greater hardships that might have been.

Since the closure of statutory education on 20 March, our schools have continued to support our children and young people and I note with pride that more than 700 hub settings have remained open to provide childcare for our more vulnerable learners and the children of our critical workers who needed it. In taking on this different role and contributing to the national effort to tackle the virus, our teaching and school staff have been able to help release thousands of critical workers to maintain their key roles, support the country at a time of national need and ultimately save lives. As a country we are indebted to all of our critical workers.

Next phase of schools' operations from 29 June

We know the impact of the coronavirus will be felt for some time to come. In making the decision to re-open schools to more learners I am making use of the headroom available to us to ensure the vast majority of children have some vital contact time with their schools and settings at the end of this summer term. This time will be primarily focused on our children's wellbeing and their learning. It is a safe space to check in, catch up and prepare for September. Without this opportunity before September, the majority of learners would spend six months away from school. The impact of this on their wellbeing and learning is of great concern to me. From next week the vast majority of learners will be able to see their friends safely, see their teachers in their normal schools, engage with their schools and the school routine, re-visit their learning and focus on their wellbeing.

Having directed a significant proportion of our teachers and school staff to provide childcare and support in our hub provision over the past months, and now re-directing their focus to opening all schools for the end of the summer term and their primary function, we cannot sustain the same level of childcare support from our teachers and school staff. I also believe this should not be expected of them at this current time if we consider the role they need to play, the role they are best placed to play, in supporting the education of our children and young people. I have received a large volume of correspondence from families who feel they struggle to cope with home learning or who tell me about the additional needs their children have and the additional support they required. Many are concerned with their children's mental health and wellbeing with sustained separation from their friends, teachers and routine.

In my role as Minister for Education, I must look to the teaching and learning of our children and young people as a priority. Our workforce is reduced with a number of staff shielding, issues with their own caring arrangements and challenges with the physical space restrictions. Two of the key challenges with schools re-opening to more learners are firstly how we service that need, and secondly that we cannot sustain the level of childcare support temporarily provided in local hubs and how national and local government and employers in Wales can support our critical workers to continue their vital role.

From Monday of this week, 22 June, as part of the adjustments and easing of social restrictions, childcare and play settings are able to reopen. Settings that have remained open will be able to care for more children and those settings which have closed temporarily

are able to reopen. This provision is planned to continue throughout the remainder of this term and over the summer. Childcare settings will play a vital role and offer much needed support to the children and families who need them. It will take some time for capacity to increase and we must be mindful that these settings will continue to need to work within the restrictions and parameters in place, with social distancing, added controls over hygiene and infection control and the full guidelines for childcare settings at this time.

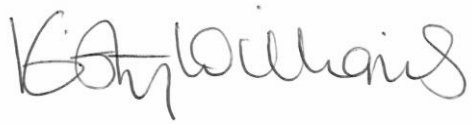
In addition to our childcare and play settings, our schools will also continue to offer additional support to our vulnerable learners and the children of our critical workers. We expect children attending hub provision to move back to their own school or setting wherever possible. For those learners who are currently using hub provision, we expect schools and settings to continue to make available additional provision for those learners, alongside the learning that they are entitled to for the remainder of the summer term. This means childcare support will continue to be available for our critical workers over and above the contact time schools are able to put in place locally for the end of the summer term.

Local authorities are working closely with schools and settings operating as hubs to manage the transition. I do recognise this will not be easy and there are different needs in different communities across Wales which we must seek to meet. Having provided national guidelines for schools and childcare settings and in agreement with the WLGA and our local authorities and school trade unions, the Welsh Government firmly recognises that we are not the employer of school staff. Local authorities will put in place local childcare arrangements and other options as they are able to support taking into account the capacity within each school and setting including of the staff and the physical space, the operating models used by the authority, the demand for places in each area and the needs of learners. Schools have been communicating with their school communities, explaining the arrangements they are able to put in place locally, how they will operate and what provision is available. I would encourage parents, carers and guardians to continue to engage with their schools and settings and local authorities to understand what other provision may be made available locally.

The Welsh Government and local government continue to monitor the transmission of the virus in Wales. We must be ready to respond to developments in the virus including making best use of the headroom available or putting in place additional measures if further restriction is necessary. We have confirmed there is no expectation that schools will continue hub provision during the summer holidays. Childcare and play settings are able to open and local authorities may make alternative provision available for this time.

I fully understand how families juggle their working time and annual leave to cover school holidays normally. For many the breakfast club or after school club are essential for the children who attend and for the parents to be able to meet their work or other commitments. One of the key issues I see is that where part-time school is without the adequate wrap around provision and childcare, parents may quickly exhaust the option to use annual leave and we must continue to encourage employers to support flexible working arrangements wherever they can at this time, including homeworking where possible for those who have caring commitments and of course for those who are shielding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg/Minister for Education

Adam Calcutt

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
4th July 2020

Dear Ms Williams,

Thank you for your response to my petition: P-05-985 to provide childcare equivalent to what was available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am pleased that it will be discussed at the Petitions Committee meeting on 17th July.

I am glad to have the opportunity to respond to the points you raise in your letter and to clarify my arguments.

To give you some background: my wife and I are both clinical NHS staff, working for the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board; we have amassed a total of 43 years of NHS service between us. As lockdown restrictions commenced back in March, our major concern, along with the obvious worries regarding the health of loved ones, was how we would be able to continue to work when schools shut. We have two young children aged five and seven, who clearly cannot be left at home on their own. Thankfully, our local authority (Monmouthshire County Council) provided childcare for the children of those designated key workers at school "hubs" and so we were able to continue to work every day as usual throughout this period of national crisis, reassured that our children were safe and happy. The school hubs have provided an invaluable service, allowing key workers to continue their essential roles, and we are very grateful for this provision.

However, we were informed by Monmouthshire County Council late in the evening of 15th June that from the following Monday (22nd June) hub childcare provision would be substantially cut with hubs open only from 8.30am to 4.00pm, as opposed to the previous hours of 8.00am to 6.00pm. These reduced hours make it impossible for anyone to work a standard eight-hour day. We were given less than a weeks' notice of the impending changes. No explanation for the change was given. No alternative options were offered. By initially offering childcare for the extended period of 8.00am to 6.00pm, the requirement for this to counteract the loss of the usual mechanisms of care has obviously been recognised; how, suddenly, are key workers expected to be able to manage without this resource?

We lobbied Monmouthshire County Council to reverse this decision but, as they refused to relent, I decided to launch my online petition. We are well aware of how these changes have adversely affected the key workers using the hub our children attend at Llanfoist Fawr Primary School, but also wanted to represent the wider community of key workers across Wales who will also be facing difficulties with this change in hours. It is for this reason that I launched my petition: to support the key workers of Wales in asking for childcare to be maintained during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

As you rightly state in your response, breakfast and after school club provision are essential for parents to meet their work commitments under "normal" circumstances. We have based our working days around childcare being available between the hours of 8.00am and 5.00pm. Working families throughout the country require these extended hours. At the point the hours of the school hubs were reduced, no alternative childcare arrangements were available due to the restrictions in place. Families could not help and most other childcare providers were closed. This has made it impossible for critical workers to fulfil their essential roles.

You request clarity as to when we wish to see a return to "normal" childcare hours; we did not want the hub school childcare hours to be reduced to below those of a normal extended school day. We wanted childcare to remain available for a minimum of 8.00am to 5.00pm until such a point as "normal" schooling, incorporating breakfast and after school clubs as usual, resumes.

Unfortunately, as time has gone on, this means that my petition will not be discussed until your meeting on 17th July which is now the end of the summer term as our local authority has failed to provide the additional week of term directed by you in your announcement on 3rd June. This means key worker families will have struggled over the last four weeks to drop off and collect their children in time while still fulfilling their work commitments – which have not changed. To this end, my campaign now has to focus on ensuring that at the start of the next academic year in September, schools will provide childcare for their normal extended days, not just the hours children attend lessons.

You state that "we cannot sustain the same level of childcare support from our teachers and school staff... this should not be expected of them at this current time if we consider the role they need to play". However, without adequate childcare in place, key workers cannot fulfil the roles *they* need to play. We were defined as "key workers" because the services we provide are deemed essential to maintain the health, safety, security and wellbeing of the nation. The services we deliver have not altered; they remain just as necessary now as they did at the height of the crisis. The message is clear and simple: key workers cannot work without adequate childcare. If longer hours of childcare were necessary to support key workers before, they are still needed now; nothing has changed. If we, as a nation, want essential services to continue, adequate childcare must be in place.

We understand that the teaching workforce may be depleted by staff illness and shielding, but this is no different in key worker roles. We are told that background NHS sickness levels have decreased recently, as staff make the extra effort to maintain services, but levels of stress-related absence have increased. Putting extra strain on working families by removing childcare will only add to this burden. You raise school staff's own issues with caring responsibilities; of course we appreciate that school staff have childcare concerns as well, but surely ensuring adequate provision would benefit school staff, too, as they also constitute key worker roles.

Breakfast and after school clubs were mainly staffed by teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. With school sessions being restricted to just a few children at any one time, these support staff are not necessary for lessons, thus freeing them up to provide care within the hubs. The majority of schools have sufficient of these support workers to allow a rota system for staffing the extended hours and, given that they usually staff breakfast and after school clubs, it would make no difference to their usual working hours. Just a few school support staff providing extended hours childcare would enable far greater numbers of key workers to continue to fulfil their roles to the benefit of us all. Working families are already used to paying for this wrap-around childcare. We are happy to return to this, which may well affect willingness to deliver provision.

Alternatively, childcare at hubs over the school holidays was provided by local authority leisure staff; could this additional resource not be utilised instead?

I must also take issue with our assertion that "we expect schools and settings to continue to make available additional provision for those learners [key worker children], alongside the learning that they are entitled to for the remainder [sic] of the summer term". Key worker children are not being allowed to access hub childcare on either side of the "Check in, Catch up, Prepare" school sessions currently being offered, a stance that effectively excludes them from accessing education. These children have already missed out on home learning and so are further penalised by this measure. A recent survey conducted at Stranmillis University College in Northern Ireland by Dr Noel Purdy reported key workers had "particular difficulties in home-schooling their children". We accept they have had opportunities while attending hubs to see and play with their friends, to spend time with teaching staff and to be engaged in many varied and interesting activities, but they

have received no formal age-appropriate teaching throughout this entire period and will therefore be falling substantially behind their peers in academic attainment. How can this be considered fair? We all joined in with the weekly “clap for carers”, but is this how key workers should now be “rewarded” with their children receiving sub-standard education as a thanks for all their hard work?

School sessions are currently running for, on average, three hours only. In order to accommodate caring for their children around these hours key workers would have to take annual leave for the full day. Working families struggle to provide childcare during school holidays at the best of times; annual leave does not cover the length of time children are off school. We dare not take any leave at the moment as, despite numerous requests and with less than two weeks until the end of term, there has still been no confirmation of what childcare provision will be available over the summer holidays. We do not have enough leave to cover a six-week break. It is also not only just a matter of having leave available, that leave has to be negotiated with colleagues. In order for essential services to keep running a certain number of staff need to be present in work. Critical services cannot just shut down for six weeks. The children of key workers have been disadvantaged over the past few months as their parents have not been at home with them to enable them to participate in home learning. Any learning key worker families have managed has had to be squeezed into days off, not at all comparable with the opportunities for daily educational activities other children have been able to undertake. Key worker children are, therefore, already at risk of falling behind their peers. To discriminate against them when there is no evidence that by accessing the hub for wrap-around care they would pose any more of an infection risk than that families with multiple siblings accessing different year groups or even different schools would be exposed to, is discriminatory. Alun Davies, MS for Blaenau Gwent, has kindly taken forward our concerns on behalf of his key worker constituents and the local population who will suffer as a result of reduced critical services and has informed us that when he approached Public Health Wales regarding key worker children accessing school sessions and wrap-around hub childcare he was told that “so long as the WG guidance is being adhered to as much as possible in both mainstream school setting and hub setting, then I see no reason why pupils could not attend both settings and I can see nothing in the WG guidance to say that they should not do so”, but this guidance is not being followed by local authorities. It unfairly penalises the children of key workers who are unable to take time off work to manage a much-reduced school day.

Our concern is that should, as expected, this situation with shortened school hours and reduced attendance days with a focus on home learning, persist into the new academic year we will not be able to manage at all. You acknowledge that “parents may quickly exhaust the option to use annual leave” but fail to provide a viable alternative. Homeworking is simply not an option for the vast majority of key workers. Key workers include clinical NHS staff, hospital domestics and porters; refuse collectors; home carers and care home staff; police officers and firefighters; supermarket workers and delivery drivers – none of whom can utilise the option of homeworking. You suggest that employers should be encouraged to support flexible working, but this often does not work in practise even when it could be a possibility. Staff within our Health Board who perform office-based roles and who believe they could work from home are having this opportunity refused; indeed, our Health Board has recently placed an embargo on new VPNs, thereby removing an avenue for homeworking.

While some alternative childcare settings may now be starting to open, accessing these is not an option for many. As you say, they will have their own restrictions in place and capacity will be limited. Now is not an appropriate time for parents to be seeking out new childcare arrangements. Before feeling confident with sending their children somewhere new, parents first need to visit facilities and meet staff, whether that be childminders in their own homes or larger-scale childcare providers; this is not feasible at present. If it is considered too much of an infection risk for children to access school hubs before and after school sessions, how can children attending alternative providers for wrap-around care be a safer option? Changing site necessitates transport arrangements which surely create an additional level of exposure.

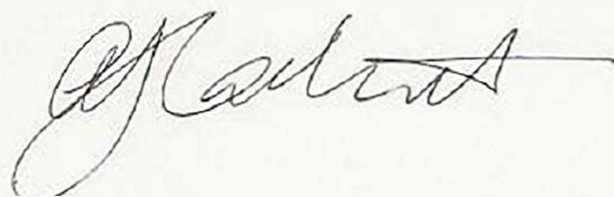
We are now allowed to "bubble" with just one other family which may help some with informal childcare arrangements, but for many this will make no difference at all and this option was not in place when hub childcare was first reduced. Family assistance relies on, as you point out, usually grandparents and is only an option when they live close by. By definition, grandparents will fit into the older age category and many will be shielding due to various health issues and therefore unable to assist with childcare. Others may be physically well but, given the well-publicised greater effects and poorer outcomes of covid-19 for older people, they may be concerned about the prospects of taking on childcare on a regular, lengthy basis. Many older people have hardly left their homes over the past few months and will have their own fears to contend with. It is unfair to put working families in a position whereby they have to request elderly grandparents to look after their children, knowing that grandparents may be (justifiably) too frightened to do so. Children need to be cared for in an environment which is safe and familiar. Moving between settings surely creates a much greater infection risk than remaining on a school site which already has safe social distancing measures in place.

In addition to more informal care with friends and relatives, working parents rely on childcare schemes run in centres such as local leisure centres (for example the Mon Games) over the long summer holidays. With leisure centres in Wales remaining closed and no date yet set for reopening, it is highly unlikely this resource will be available in two weeks' time when the holidays commence. We desperately need confirmation of what childcare will be available over the holiday period to enable us to negotiate leave from work, whilst maintaining services and remaining fair to other hard-working colleagues.

The key workers of Wales have worked tirelessly throughout the last few highly troubled months. We want to keep working to provide the essential services we deliver, but cannot do this without adequate childcare in place. We are asking, therefore, for childcare to be provided at schools, as previously, for the usual extended school day hours or 8.00am to 5.00pm. Additionally, we need provision for childcare over the school holidays and for the children of key workers to be able to access childcare at school either side of attendance of lessons to prevent further disruption to their education.

Please do contact me should any of the points I have made require further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Calcutt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adam Calcutt

Agenda Item 2.13

P-05-988 Give key worker children equal access to their schools and teachers

This petition was submitted by Catherine Evans having collected a total of 508 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Key worker children in some parts of Wales have been excluded from 'check in, catch up, prepare' sessions in their schools. They are not allowed any face-to-face contact with their teachers or friends if their parents also need childcare to enable them to do critical work. They are to be looked after in leisure centres with inadequate information about provision for their health, emotional well-being or education.

Schools should plan to include all learners this term and in September.

Additional Information:

Welsh Government guidance on the reopening of schools states that 'all learners who are able to, have the opportunity to attend their school or setting for face to face time over the remainder of the summer term'.

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales

**P-05-988 Give key worker children equal access to their schools and teachers,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 09.07.20**



9th July 2020

Janet Finch-Saunders (Chair)
Senedd Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

In March this year, key workers in Wales were asked only to use childcare hubs if absolutely necessary. Like many families, I was working from home apart from my own key worker session (I am a teacher in England) and my husband was furloughed until mid-May. As schools over the border increased operations in June, my husband began to use annual leave to be at home with our children while I went out to work. We did all we could to avoid using overstretched key worker childcare.

We were all relieved at the prospect of children returning to school after the announcement made by Kirsty Williams in early June, and planned to use a blend of childcare and ‘check in, catch up, prepare sessions’ to facilitate our own work and to enable our children to access the social and academic provision they sorely needed. Less than a week before this was due to start, however, we were told that they could not access both and wouldn’t be allowed to socialise with friends. Key worker childcare in my children’s school was restricted to supervision by a TA to complete online learning. This news in itself was very damaging to my children’s emotional well-being.

On the evening of Wednesday 24th June, Powys County Council wrote to parents, informing us that key worker provision would, in fact, be provided in a local leisure centre and the school advised us that we could access this provision or ‘check in’ but not both. No information was provided about measures to promote key worker children’s health, well-being or education; unlike children attending check in, who were made aware of what to expect. It later transpired that these sessions would be run by CIW-registered childcare workers, not teachers. Key worker children in Powys were, therefore, excluded from their schools, peer groups and teaching and learning. A caveat was later added, that children of school staff could be looked after at school but still not attend check in sessions.

As a family, we decided to put our children’s well-being first, and my husband has used the remainder of his annual leave to look after them at home, so they can go to school one day a week. My own employer has also been accommodating thus far. There will be no more annual leave in September and my own school will be fully open. We also have the additional problem of an extra

week's half term in October to cover with unpaid parental leave at a time of increased risk of redundancy. There is no benefit to our family of adding a week's school in July as we are unable to use it due to long-standing prior commitments.

I have talked to numerous parents, teachers and Local Authorities while my petition has been running, and have realised that this situation affects a minority of families. I understand that key worker children can, in fact, attend childcare most of the week and also go to their check in session, but this is at the discretion of individual schools (I believe Powys may have issued a county-wide directive requiring schools not to mix groups at all, but have yet to see this). Welsh Government and indeed Powys's own guidance on the reopening of schools advocates for the inclusion and entitlement of key worker children to check in sessions (see attached commentary) but this is not happening in practice.

I believe that schools should be required, as a minimum, to provide classroom-based teaching for all pupils on roll; distributed equally. Scientific evidence published in the BMJ (attached) states that children are unlikely to be super-spreaders and all should be allowed back to school' – a position that I support as a teacher. There is no need to separate key worker children from their peers – please see also my comments (point 6) on Welsh Government's guidance on the reopening of schools (attached).

At present, I believe some schools are looking at what can't be done as opposed to what can and should. My children's school is operating at about 22% capacity; yet key worker children weren't included in their catch up planning. I understand that this process has been rushed and logistically challenging, but it concerns me that inclusive practice has not been the starting point for reopening schools.

I believe that a statutory requirement needs to be put in place for schools to include all learners in classroom-based teaching equally, with no segregation of pupils whose parents are key workers.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Evans

**P-05-988 Give key worker children equal access to their schools and teachers,
Correspondence -Petitioner to Committee: Additional information, 09.07.20**

Commentary: Welsh Government operational guidance on reopening of schools.

1. It is expected that all learners who are able to, have the opportunity to attend their school or setting for face to face time over the remainder of the summer term. In practice, this means schools accommodating reduced number of learners each day according to their capacity while ensuring appropriate social distancing is in place.

In most schools in Powys (and anecdotally, Cardiff, Flintshire and Monmouthshire), face to face time for key worker children with teachers and friends is not being offered, if their parents use childcare to enable them to do critical work. Where children are being looked after in leisure centres, they are not even allowed on school premises.

Again anecdotally, children in the same position in Swansea, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Denbighshire and Vale of Glamorgan are able to access the same number of 'check in' classroom-based sessions as their peers, while attending childcare for the rest of the week.

Key worker families have no choice but to send their children to childcare as their employers know it is available to them. Headteachers, however, refer to the 'choice' between childcare and attending school.

'all learners who are able to' do not currently have the opportunity to attend their school and many are not receiving teaching. Will this be allowed to continue into September? With social distancing in place (my children's school is operating classes of just 5-6) there should be no need to segregate key worker children.

2. Minister for Education's 5 key principles for the next phase [include:]

- The safety and mental, emotional and physical well-being of learners and staff.
- The confidence of parents and carers, staff and learners – based on evidence and information – so that they can plan ahead.

The emotional well-being of key worker children who are being excluded from their settings has not been considered. My daughter (10) and my son (7) are the only ones in their friendship groups who will have to attend key worker childcare in September. Their emotional well-being will suffer, as will their academic progress.

As parents, we are unable to plan ahead as our children's school will not assure us that they will teach our children in September. Powys's plan to introduce leisure centre hubs was announced on the evening of 24th June, again impacting parents' ability to plan ahead. We had to change our plans to request 'catch up' sessions, using annual leave to do so – we will have no annual leave left in September. We don't know if one of us will have to request part time working so that our children can be educated in school.

3. In practice, it is expected that a school or setting's capacity will mean that overall, at most, a third of learners present at any one time.

It is our expectation that in most schools learners would have the opportunity to attend school on 3 occasions before the summer holidays, however in some schools it may be more.

Our children's school is operating at around 22% capacity with just five or six learners per room. It is open four days per week and non-childcare children are offered four days over four weeks. Key worker children could and should have been accommodated. Schools should be providing education to all children on roll (and by education I don't mean undifferentiated online tasks aimed at classes of combined year groups).

4. For learners who are currently using of hubs provision, the expectation is that schools and settings should continue to make additional provision for those learners, alongside the learning that they are entitled to for the remainder of the summer term.

In a number of Local Authorities, schools are being supported in not providing the learning that keyworker children are entitled to. Many don't have access to a teacher. They are either supervised by TAs doing online work or in external hubs looked after by CIW childcare workers.

5. Schools and settings should also keep in mind that provision for critical workers and vulnerable children may be required in the event of a second peak in transmission and lockdown. Further guidance on this will be provided.

In the event of a second peak and lockdown, key worker children must not continue to be disadvantaged while their parents carry out critical work, as schools begin to reopen again.

6. To reduce the risk of transmission, where possible the same staff should interact with the same group of learners over time.

Schools have not taken account of the conditional 'where possible' in their planning. It is not possible for key worker children to receive the education they are entitled to if they are excluded from their classrooms and teachers. If key workers are to continue in their jobs, inclusion of their children in their school, with their peer group is necessary. Many, like me, will have to consider leaving those jobs if our children are to pay the price with their emotional well-being and learning.

7. The operation of a school or setting will have an important impact on learners' physical, mental and emotional and social well-being. When planning to increase operations, schools and staff should consider how this has an impact on well-being.

Some schools have not taken the mental, social and emotional well-being of key worker children into account at all. While all other children were provided with information about what to expect, what school would look like and how they would be kept safe, none of this was provided for families using key worker childcare. Powys County Council is yet to explain what to expect from leisure centre-based childcare. Those children are expected to adapt to unfamiliar faces and spaces with no preparation.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-988
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03594/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

9 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter dated 1 July regarding petition P-05-989 to ensure the children of key workers have equal access to the '*check in, catch up, prepare*' sessions in their schools.

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide some clarity on this matter with the Petitions Committee. I understand this is a concern for many families across Wales now that the arrangements for the operation of schools and settings across Wales until the end of the summer term are in place.

Since the closure of statutory education on 20 March, our schools have continued to support our children and young people and I note with pride that more than 700 hub settings have remained open to provide childcare for our more vulnerable learners and the children of our critical workers who needed it. In taking on this different role and contributing to the national effort to tackle the virus, our teaching and school staff have been able to help release thousands of critical workers to maintain their key roles, support the country at a time of national need and ultimately save lives. As a country we are indebted to all of our critical workers.

However, we must recognise that Wales remains in a state of lockdown, and the coronavirus remains a real threat and will continue to have an impact on our lives for a longer period of time. Whilst we continue to tackle the coronavirus and plan for the potential of a second peak, the First Minister is simultaneously making best and cautious use of the headroom available to put in place minor adjustments to ease the social restrictions in place, and it is very clear this is a transitional position. In making the decision to re-open schools to more learners, I have made best use of the headroom available to us to ensure the vast majority of children have some vital contact time with their schools and settings at the end of this summer term, including the children of our keyworkers.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

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CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My key aim is that as many children as possible are provided with an opportunity to see their friends safely, see their teachers in their normal schools, engage with their schools and the school routine, re-visit their learning and focus on their wellbeing. It is a safe space to check in, catch up and prepare for September. During this brief period schools and settings will be primarily focused on our children's wellbeing and their learning. Without this opportunity before September, the majority of learners would spend six months away from school. The impact of this on their wellbeing and learning is of great concern to me.

As school operations increase over the summer term, we would expect children currently attending hubs provision (possibly at a different school) to move back to their own school or setting. For those learners, we expect schools and settings to continue to make available additional provision for those learners alongside the learning that they are entitled to for the remainder of the summer term. This means our schools will also continue to offer additional childcare support to our vulnerable learners and the children of our critical workers.

However, having provided national guidelines for schools and childcare settings and in agreement with the WLGA, our local authorities and school trade unions, the Welsh Government firmly recognises that we are not the Employer of school staff. Local authorities have put in place local arrangements taking into account the capacity within each school and setting, staff numbers and the physical space; the operating models used by the authority; the demand for places in each area and the needs of learners. They have also considered local childcare arrangements and other options they are able to support. Local authorities have worked closely with schools and settings operating as hubs to manage the transition, and schools have been communicating with their school communities to explain the arrangements put in place locally, how they will operate and what provision is available.

I recognise this has not been easy, there are different needs in different communities across Wales which we must seek to meet. Inevitably schools are being flexible in their approach. To welcome back an increased number of children and young people conditions must be safe and the risk of transmitting the virus low. This has meant introducing stringent cleaning and hygiene measures for schools and settings that meet both national and local guidelines, social distancing measures and only a limited number of staff and children attending at any one time. Limiting social contacts is also an important part of reducing the likelihood of seeing large outbreaks of the virus. It is important that we continue to reduce mixing between groups of children. Keeping people in small, consistent groups of adults and learners which remain the same throughout the week, and separate from other groups, helps to do this and avoids creating chains of transmission.

In returning to school, we advise that children should attend just one setting wherever possible, and should remain in the same small, consistent group within that setting as far as possible, to help reduce the likelihood of the virus moving between groups within that one setting, or moving between groups in different settings. If a child therefore attends more than one setting, they should remain in the same, small group across both settings wherever possible. Mixing children from different groups, or different schools, is not consistent with the need to minimise overall levels of contact. Parents and settings may need to discuss these risks and consider how to manage them to reduce the spread of the virus, and this will mean working together and in line with the guidance provided.

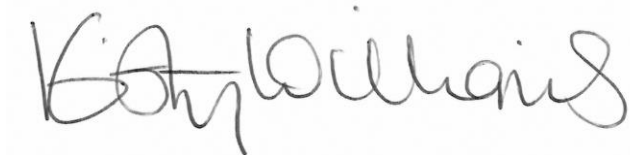
It is the responsibility of each school to introduce and communicate these local arrangements and where ever possible to provide an opportunity for all their learners to attend to check-in, catch up and prepare for September. I would encourage parents, carers and guardians to continue to engage with their schools and settings, and local authorities,

to understand what provision is available locally to the end of the summer term that best suits their circumstances.

I am sure the authors of the petition recognise this point, and I am glad to see the petition seeks a return to the provision of normal educational arrangements for the children of key workers at a later date when social restrictions are removed and schools and settings can return to more normal arrangements. I will shortly make a further announcement on plans for September.

I continue to have immense pride in the immense effort, dedication and sacrifice of our critical workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Our NHS and social care workers, our supply chains and essential services, our emergency services, and our teachers and school staff have played a key role as critical workers in reducing the impact of the pandemic, safeguarding against loss of life and avoiding the greater hardships that might have been. The Welsh Government and local government continue to monitor the transmission of the virus in Wales. We must be ready to respond to developments in the virus including making putting in place additional measures if further restriction is necessary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

**P-05-988 Give key worker children equal access to their schools and teachers,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 09.07.20**

Thanks for forwarding this letter to me. Unfortunately it doesn't really address the disparity between the ability of key worker children to access both childcare and lessons in different parts of Wales. I really think the discretionary element needs to be removed: while some non-key worker children might only have received two, two hour check in sessions, others will have received four full days. In another scenario, key worker children might not have any check in opportunity while non-key worker children have all the available time (as has been the case in Powys). This enormous variation needs to be addressed and shouldn't be dependent on the perceptions of individual schools.

I'm very pleased about the news that all children in Wales will be able to go back to school in September; I am a teacher and am very keen to welcome my own classes back. My only concern is that, should there be a second spike leading to further lockdowns, all children will need equal access to their classroom and social opportunities in the event of another phased reopening. I'm very keen to ensure that the children of key workers would be able to attend school with their peers if this were the case.

I would also like to check that contact groups or bubbles in September will not in any way exclude the children of key workers, or any parents who need to access wraparound childcare.

Best wishes

Catherine

Agenda Item 2.14

P-05-990 Open schools in September. Scrap blended learning

This petition was submitted by Martha Ogunremi having collected a total of 9,266 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Schools in other parts of the UK will be opening fully in September. The Welsh Government has no solid plans for this and is increasingly talking about blended learning for the longer term. Our children need to be back at school in September to prevent children in Wales falling behind other parts of the UK, allow parents to work and give children their right to a proper education. Kirsty Williams has given no thought to how BL will work if parents need to work. Parents will be made unemployable.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport East
- South Wales East



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Arrangements for schools in September
DATE 9th July 2020
BY Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education

I have today confirmed that all pupils will be able to return to school in September.

The Welsh Technical Advisory Group, which provides scientific and technical advice to Government during emergencies, recommends that schools “*plan to open in September with 100% of pupils physically present on school sites, subject to a continuing, steady decline in the presence of COVID-19 in the community.*”

The paper which includes this advice has been published today.

<https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-advice-return-school>

Autumn term will start on 1st September and schools that can accommodate all pupils from the start of the term should do so.

There will be a period of flexibility in recognition that schools may want to focus on priority year groups, such as those new to secondary schools, those sitting exams next summer or those in reception classes. This will also allow time, up to a fortnight, for any planning and reorganisation.

I will be publishing updated operational and learning guidance for September published next week. Government education officials are supported in this work by local authorities, head-teachers, public health officials, teaching unions and education practitioners.

I have also outlined plans to make £29m available to ‘recruit, recover and raise standards’ in Welsh schools in response to the impact still felt from the pandemic.

My officials are also working with FE colleges to support a return in September. Further details will be announced in due course.

P-05-990 Open schools in September. Scrap blended learning, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 10.07.20

UsForThemCymru welcomes school announcement

The campaign group UsForThem Cymru, which was set up to call for full time school with no social distancing from September for all children in Wales, has welcomed today's news that all children will be returning to school full-time in September.

Martha Ogunremi, Spokesperson for UsForThem Cymru, said "We are delighted that Kirsty Williams, Welsh Government's Minister for Education, has listened to parents, teaching staff and experts and announced that all children will have their right to a full time education reinstated in September, however, we need reassurance that repeat closures will only occur as a last resort and children will now be prioritised in during this crisis. As the Minister has clarified, evidence has shown that children are at low risk from COVID-19 and are the least likely people to spread the disease."

"Most children will not have been in school since March except up to three short sessions and this cannot continue. We know that nearly three quarters of children have accessed an hour or less of learning each day and parents tell us that they are unable to give more time as they juggle the demands of work, school and home. Teachers tell us that they want to get back to teaching their classes and this news brings welcome clarity. This simply cannot continue."

"Following this morning's announcement of additional funding, we look forward to the detail of how the Welsh Government will ensure that children are not disadvantaged from their time away from the classroom. There will need to be will need comprehensive action to make sure that children's education level, wellbeing and physical health is returned to the level it would have been without this crisis. Sadly safeguarding service may need a similar level of investment."

"We particularly welcome the news that children will not need to social distance from peers. We know that children learn through play and it is vital for their wellbeing, as well as their social and emotional development. Over 120 leading experts agree that It is crucial to remove social distancing measures so that children can interact with each other and re-establish friendships to help them recover."

Agenda Item 3.1

P-05-954 Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island

This petition was submitted by Kevin O'Connell having collected a total of 5,088 signatures on paper.

Text of Petition

As a victim of child abuse by catholic priests and monks I wish to get the Welsh Governmnet to hold a public inquiry into the historic child abuse on Caldly Island. Victims need the truth and answers as to why an ongoing investigation for 29 years has failed the victims. The inquiry will help to safeguard children in the future.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

Public inquiry into historic child abuse

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 2020

Petitions Committee | 2020

Research Briefing:

Petition Number: P-05-954

Petition title: Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island

Text of petition: As a victim of child abuse by catholic priests and monks I wish to get the Welsh Government to hold a public inquiry into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island. Victims need the truth and answers as to why an ongoing investigation for 29 years has failed the victims. The inquiry will help to safeguard children in the future.

Background

In November 2017, [the Guardian newspaper](#) reported that six women had begun civil proceedings against the Cistercian order alleging that a monk, Father Thaddeus Kotik from the Abbey of Our Lady and St Samson on Caldey Island had sexually abused them during the 1970's and 1980's. The Guardian article stated that the children had reported the abuse to their parents and the Abbot had been informed. The women subsequently received compensation payments.

Following the Guardian report, [BBC Wales reported](#) that Dyfed Powys Police had confirmed that they had received reports of abuse, and while there had been investigations in 2014 and 2016 they could not prosecute as the monk had died in 1992. The [Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors group](#) called for an independent investigation at the time, and [it was reported by the BBC](#), that the Children's Commissioner for Wales had said that there was not enough information available to launch an inquiry.

Purpose of a public inquiry

The Cabinet Office [Inquiries Guidance](#) states that an inquiry might be set up for one or more reasons. These include:

- To establish the cause of a major disaster, accident or other event involving significant damage or loss of life;

- To make recommendations as to how to learn lessons from such an event;
- To investigate serious allegations of general public concern which require thorough and impartial investigation and for which ordinary civil or criminal processes may not be adequate or appropriate.

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) was established in 2014 following serious, high profile instances of non-recent child sexual abuse. The Inquiry has launched 15 investigations into a broad range of institutions identified on the basis of the [Panel's criteria for selection of investigations](#). These include separate inquiries into Religious Organisations and Settings; the Anglican Church; and the Roman Catholic Church.

In her letter to the Committee, Julie Morgan, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services states that the Welsh Government has informed the Independent inquiry of the Caldey island events. IICSA has said this is a matter of interest to them.

The Truth Project

The [Truth Project](#) is part of IICSA. It aims to offer victims and survivors of child sexual abuse the chance to share their experiences and be heard with respect. Experiences can be shared in writing, over the phone or in person (although this is on hold in line with social distancing guidance).

The Truth Project support service does not provide therapy or make referrals to therapists or help with long term recovery. It can offer:

- emotional and practical support with sharing experiences, and help with any questions or concerns a victim or survivor has, and
- advice on other services that can give more support in the future.

Sharing your experience with the Truth Project is **not part of a legal process and the IICSA will not investigate an individual's case.**

National Assembly for Wales action

On [29 November 2017](#), Darren Millar AM asked the then Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies whether any consideration had been given to commissioning an independent inquiry into allegations of abuse on Caldey Island. In response, the Minister said that the Welsh Government advised anyone who suffered abuse to report allegations to the police, to contact local authorities' social services or the Truth Project. He also said that, at that time, Dyfed-Powys Police were engaged in ongoing investigations into the allegations, and that as such, it would not be appropriate to comment further. He also noted that the Children's Commissioner had written to Caldey Island abbey to seek assurances. He said

that it was ‘too early to call for an inquiry’ because of the detail that was still emerging and the live police investigation.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Julie Morgan AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-954
Ein cyf/Our ref JM/00186/2

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 April 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 11 March.

The matter of Caldey Island has been in front of the Assembly Chamber numerous times since 2017.

Ministers have all indicated their abhorrence at the historical abuse that took place on Caldey Island. We have consistently encouraged any person who has any information of abuse in Caldey Abbey, Pembrokeshire to contact the police. I too would reiterate this call.

Some of the victim / survivors have received compensation, those who have not should seek legal advice if they wish to pursue a case for compensation.

If any victim / survivor wants to share their experiences I would urge them to contact the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's Truth Project; The Inquiry's office in Wales is taking statements from those people who want to share their experience of abuse with them. The sessions are held in private.

Feedback received from victims and survivors who have attended sessions has been very positive.

The petition you are considering says:

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Julie.Morgan@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

“As a victim of child abuse by catholic priests and monks I wish to get the Welsh Government to hold a public inquiry into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island. Victims need the truth and answers as to why an ongoing investigation for 29 years has failed the victims. The inquiry will help to safeguard children in the future.”

Welsh Government has considered this issue a number of times. It has, to this point, resisted the calls for an inquiry and does not think the case for it has been made.

As a government we are entrusted with duties, and responsibilities, to reach evidence based decisions, without favour. We have considered whether or not an inquiry would realise outcomes from which learning would occur to improve future safeguarding outcomes.

We considered the actions of the police. The police did investigate the allegations in 2014 and 2016 and in each case decided not to pursue the matter any further. The first time the allegations were brought to the attention of the police were in 2014. The petition is not correct as there is we have no evidence of an ongoing 29 year investigation.

Two critical factor affected the Police decision not to progress matters.

First the unavailability of the two key people who could give evidence in regard to any allegations. The perpetrator Kotik and the Abbot, both of whom had died. Neither could be charged or compelled to give evidence.

A public inquiry or otherwise would not realise any learning either from their motivation, nor how the perpetrator managed to evade capture for such a period. This would have been a key inquiry outcome. The police would have little to offer the inquiry in terms of learning from the investigations. We also considered that there is an ongoing Independent Inquiry (the Independent Inquiry in to Child Sexual Abuse - IICSA) which is looking at institutional failure to protect children and young people. Welsh Government has informed the Independent inquiry into child sexual abuse of the Caldey island events. IICSA has said this is a matter of interest to them. We did not consider it is a good use of our limited resources to duplicate the IICSA inquiry.

Secondly, we considered that the police interviewed the parents who were told about the abuse by their children and chose not to inform the authorities.

We considered if such an inquiry would assist those abused to obtain swift justice and or compensation. As reported in the Western Mail, in 2017 six women received compensation from the island’s abbey after bringing a legal action highlighting they had been abused by Father Thaddeus Kotik. We considered as this action had already successfully resulted in justice for those women, and compensation, and without any public inquiry in place; we are not convinced an inquiry would add anything that has already been achieved through the available routes to support further claims for redress.

We considered a further purpose (of an inquiry) would be to learn lessons about the behaviour of institutions. Firstly, this is the key reason for the Independent inquiry (IICSA) and to hold an inquiry in this case would be duplicating that inquiry’s work. Secondly, we noted in the view of the Children’s Commissioner there is insufficient detail to conduct an investigation.

Finally we considered the ongoing legal action being pursued by Kevin O’Connell who is a victim of historical Child Sexual Abuse at Caldey Island. Mr O’Connell, was recently featured on a TV programme, and has called for a public Inquiry into the events on the island, he has begun legal action through his solicitor, Michael Imperato. It would not be

appropriate to announce if the Welsh Government would or would not launch an inquiry into these events whilst the legal action is pending.

We consider there are strong reasons, other than simply costs, not to proceed with an inquiry. It is unlikely the Government will change its mind without evidence to the contrary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie', written in a cursive style.

Julie Morgan AC/AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted



Ben Lake AS/MP

Aelod Seneddol dros Geredigion/Member of Parliament for Ceredigion

Tŷr Cyffredin/House of Commons
Llundain / London
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Bryndulais
67 Heol y Bont/67 Bridge Street
Llanbedr Pont Steffan/Lampeter
Ceredigion
SA48 7AB

Janet Finch Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff,
CF99 1SN

28th May 2020.

Annwyl Janet,

RE: Petition P-05-954

Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island

I hope this finds you well in these uncertain times. I am writing in support of the above petition, and in the hope that you will be able to consider this letter when the Committee meets to discuss the petition on the 9th of June.

In addition to conveying my support for the petition, I would also like to make the following points in response to the letter the Committee received from the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services dated the 6th of April.

In her letter the Minister outlined the Welsh Government's view that the case for an inquiry has not been made. In particular, the Government argues that an inquiry would not be a good use of limited resources due there being an ongoing Independent Inquiry (the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – IICSA) which is looking at institutional failure to protect children and young people, and that IICSA has said that the allegations of child sexual abuse on Caldey Island is a matter of interest to them.

I am afraid that the Government is mistaken on this point. Whilst IICSA is undertaking important work in investigating a wide range of institutions, including the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, it confirmed in May 2019 that it will not be considering the concerns raised in relation to Caldey Island.

In correspondence from August 2019, IICSA explained that although it recognises the concerns that have been raised about Caldey Island by a number of people, it “is not possible for the Inquiry to consider every institution about which concerns have been raised.”

Although regrettable, such a position is understandable, and indeed, IICSA's inability to consider the concerns about Caldey Island was a key development that prompted this petition. The Welsh Government would not, therefore, be duplicating the work of IICSA if it were to initiate its own inquiry.

The Government also notes the decision taken by the police not to progress matters further, and in particular the unavailability of the perpetrator Kotik, and the Abbot, who are both deceased. This is indisputable. However, it has not yet been established whether or not there are other potential perpetrators or persons of interest who could give evidence in regard to any allegations, and from whom important learning could be realised.

Should there be no further police investigation, and given that the IICSA inquiry will not be considering the allegations of abuse on Caldey Island, it would appear that an inquiry initiated by the Welsh Government is the only route left to victims of historical child sexual abuse on the island. I concede that death may have made impossible for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, but the victims still deserve the truth to be established, their suffering to be acknowledged, and lessons to be learnt.

I hope that the committee will be able to consider these points at the meeting on the 9th of June, and look kindly on the petition's request.

Yn gywir,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Lake', written in a cursive style.

Ben Lake AS/MP
Ceredigion

P-05-954 Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island, Correspondence – Dyfed Powys Police to Caldey Island Victims Campaign Coordinator, 01.06.20



Heddlu Police
**DYFED
POWYS**

Mark Collins QPM
Prif Gwnstabl – Chief Constable.
Rhif Ffôn/Tel.No. [REDACTED]
E-Bost/E-Mail: [REDACTED]

1ST June, 2020.

Ms. Dinah Mulholland
On behalf of Kevin and [REDACTED] O'Connell
Caldey Island Victims Campaign.

Sent via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Mullholland,

In response to your e-mail dated 25th May, 2020, I provide the following information.

The first report in relation to allegations of abuse at Caldey Island was made to Dyfed Powys Police in May 2014. This report originated from Father Daniel, the Abbott at Caldey Island. The report outlined that civil litigation had commenced against the Caldey Island monastery in connection with the abuse carried out by Father Tadeuz Kotik.

A Police investigation was therefore undertaken in relation to the reported abuse. It was quickly confirmed that Kotik had died in November 1992. A total of six complainants were identified and spoken to by the investigation team, with all explaining that no previous reports had been made to Police. It was established that one of the complainants had corresponded with Father Daniel in 2010. The abuse was outlined by the complainant and there was subsequent engagement between both parties. Father Daniel did not report this to Police at that time, as he stated he didn't believe that anything could be achieved as Kotik had died many years previously. This same complainant also reported sending a letter to the previous Abbott at Caldey, Father Stephen, in 1991, a year before Kotik had died in 1992. Father Stephen had died in April 2014. Father Daniel could not



www.dyfed-powys.police.uk

Prif Gwnstabl Chief Constable Mark Collins, BSc

Pencadlys Heddlu, Blwch SB 99, Llangunnor, Sir Gâr. SA31 2PF

Police Headquarters, PO BOX 99, Llangunnor, Carmarthen. SA31 2PF

Mae Heddlu Dyfed-Powys yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Byddwn i'n sicrhau ein bod ni'n ymateb yn eich dewis iaith ac ni fydd oedi mewn perthynas ag unrhyw ohebiaeth drwy'r Gymraeg.

Dyfed-Powys Police welcomes correspondence in Welsh and in English, and we will ensure that we respond to any correspondence through the language of your choice. Corresponding via the medium of Welsh will not endure any delay.

confirm this and explained that no record of such a letter was held at Caldey. The investigation team attended at the Monastery to examine the archived records, and were unable to locate this letter or any verification that Father Stephen had received it. The 2014 Police investigation concluded that no prosecution could be taken, due to Kotik being deceased. Also, there was no evidence to suggest any abuse by other persons at Caldey Island, nor any ongoing risk of harm.

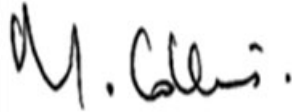
The civil litigation against the Cisterian Order at Caldey was subsequently successful, and the outcome broadly publicised in the local and national media. As a result of the publicity, additional complainants came forward to report abuse to Police. This resulted in a further investigation, 'Operation Slate'.

During Operation Slate, officers again attended Caldey Island to review the Monastery's archived records. Enquires were commenced with each complainant to document the nature of Kotik's offending and to identify whether any person in a position of responsibility had failed to act to protect children. With the exception of the one person in 2014 referred to above, complainants confirmed that they did not formerly report Kotik's offending to either church or police authorities. A small number described making disclosures to parents. Enquires carried out with parents who were alive revealed they had elected not to act on the disclosures and did not report Kotik to the authorities. A number of complainants confirmed only making disclosures to a friend or family member in adulthood and a number only did so after seeing news articles concerning the civil action against the Monastery. The Operation Slate investigation found no evidence of organisational failures by the Cistercian Order and there is no clear evidence, beyond reasonable doubt, that they failed to act to protect children or intentionally suppressed evidence of Kotik's offending behaviour. The investigation did identify substantial similarities in complainants' accounts. It is likely that if Kotik were alive, there would have been sufficient evidence for consideration of a criminal prosecution.

The last question you pose is in relation to the investigation of abuse reported by Mr O'Connell. This included reports of abuse committed by other persons. It has not been possible to identify or corroborate any abuse by other persons within the Monastery at Caldey. During the investigation into the reports, Mr O'Connell disengaged from Police. However, within the last week, we have been provided with details of a representative of Mr O'Connell who is being informed of the finalisation of the Police investigation, which is as follows - the identified suspects are deceased; there is insufficient

information to identify any other named suspects; there is insufficient information to prove that persons in authority failed to act to safeguard O'Connell, prevent offences, or that they concealed offences committed at Caldey Island.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Collins.', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Mark Collins,
Chief Constable.

Our Ref: MI/RL/O'C0024-1
Your Ref:

05 June 2020

Please reply to:

46-48 Cardiff Road
Llandaff
Cardiff
CF5 2DT

Janet Finch Saunders MS
Chair Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Dear Ms Saunders,

Kevin O'Connell and Caldey Island Inquiry Petition

I am writing further to the letter of Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services to the Committee of the 6th April last in which I am named as the solicitor of Mr. O'Connell. Mr O'Connell has been represented by another solicitor in respect of his civil compensation claim arising out of the abuse he suffered. I am acting for him (and other victims) solely in respect of the demand for a full Public Inquiry. In that respect, I would like to make some observations in respect of the aforesaid letter.

I have had the opportunity of speaking to several victims of the abuse that, it is not disputed, took place on Caldey Island. Mrs. Morgan's letter refers to compensation payments for such victims. Such payments have been made without matters being heard in Court. The priority for victims at this time is seeking the truth as to what was happening on Caldey Island and ensuring that those responsible are taken to account and lessons are learnt for the future. The Deputy Minister appears to confuse compensation payments with the obtaining of justice.

The Deputy Minister states that the matter is more properly considered by the Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse (IICSA). However, the IICSA specifically stated to ITV Wales last year that;

The Inquiry is not currently considering matters related to Caldey Island within its investigation into the Roman Catholic Church.

That was stated in the subsequent ITV documentary so the IICSA's position would have been well known to the Welsh Government. Further, it is apparent from even a cursory

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VAT No - 134778838

consideration of the IICSA website that its investigation into the Roman Catholic Church has now finished, and was limited to England.

The second inaccuracy in the Deputy Minister's letter, is the suggestion that I have commenced some sort of legal action. That is not correct.

There are a number of reasons why a Public Inquiry is the only proper process that should be followed:

1. The Deputy Minister refers on a number of occasions to police investigations. The police are one of the bodies who would be significantly scrutinised by any such inquiry. There are various allegations by victims, which may or may not be unfounded, as to police complicity in "turning a blind eye" or subsequent "cover ups". Numerous inquiries take place where there have been previous police investigations (Saville, Orgreave, IICSA, Infected Blood, Shipman) – often the investigation undertaken by the police is proved to be wholly inadequate. This is not a reason against a public inquiry.
2. Child safeguarding is a critical issue and is of course devolved. It was common during the time that the sexual abuse was being undertaken, for Catholic schools in Wales and in England to send children to the island and for the Local Authority to allow – even to actively promote – holidaying families (with of course young children) to visit the island. Many of those children will then have been victims of abuse. Therefore, issues arise as to what schools and Local Authorities actually knew as to what was happening on Caldey, what steps did they take – or more pertinently - not take? Lessons must be learnt to ensure children are properly protected today.
3. The Catholic church is quite obviously culpable and has a case to answer. What did the church authorities in Wales know of the abuse that was taking place on Caldey Island? How did they interact with other authorities/public bodies in Wales?

The fact that the Inquiry is touching on matters from some time ago, should not be a deterrent. I am currently acting for several hundred Welsh victims from the Infected Blood Scandal, which concerns a time period, primarily, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It could be argued that the fact that the matter concerns events some years ago, means that it is even more urgent that such events are scrutinized at this time. Indeed, one of the terms of reference of the Infected Blood Inquiry is why it has taken so long for there to be a thorough investigation, what happened and why? Just because there has been no investigation to date does not mean that it should not be investigated now.

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Welsh Statutory Inquiry

The Inquiries Act 2005 s1 provides that “A Minister may cause an inquiry to be held under this Act in relation to a case where it appears to him that– (a) particular events have caused, or are capable of causing, public concern, or (b) there is public concern that particular events may have occurred.” Minister includes a Welsh Minister.

Section 27 provides (insofar as is relevant):

“(1) This section applies to an inquiry for which a United Kingdom Minister is responsible.

(2) The Minister may not, without first consulting the relevant administration, include in the terms of reference anything that would require the inquiry to determine any fact that is wholly or primarily concerned with a Scottish matter or a Welsh matter”

Section 29 provides (insofar as is relevant):

“(1) This section applies to an inquiry for which the Welsh Ministers are responsible.

(2) The terms of reference of the inquiry must not require it to determine any fact or to make any recommendation that is not wholly or primarily concerned with a Welsh matter.

...(5) In this section “Welsh matter” means a matter in relation to which the Welsh Ministers have functions.”

The abuse at Caldey Island concerns Welsh matters – education, social services and safeguarding of children. Under s37 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 local authorities have a duty to children at risk of abuse. Section 28 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to promote the well-being of children. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Article 3 ECHR imposes on the state a duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent inhuman and/or degrading treatment where it knows or ought to know that there is a real and immediate risk of such treatment. Article 3 ECHR also imposes an investigative duty on the State where an arguable breach of the article has taken place including where the perpetrator is a private individual. It will be a breach of article 3 ECHR if there are serious failings in the investigation; *Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis v DSD* [2018] UKSC 11, [2019] AC 196.

The 2005 Act gives the Welsh Ministers a discretion to hold an inquiry even when the criteria are met, although such criteria are statutory considerations and will carry more weight in the decision-making process than non-statutory considerations. The discretion is converted into a duty if it is the only effective means by which the procedural duty under article 3 ECHR can

be met.

It is clear that the statutory test is met – there is public concern regarding the events that took place at Caldey Island. It is equally clear that there has been no investigation that would discharge the investigative duty under article 3 ECHR. Therefore, there is a duty on the Welsh Ministers to hold a statutory inquiry into the abuse at Caldey Island. If an inquiry is not held, the Welsh Ministers would have to explain why not bearing in mind that the UK Government set up IICSA for reasons that would appear to be indistinguishable from those relied upon in this request.

If there was any consultation between the UK Ministers and the Welsh Ministers in relation to Caldey Island, as required by section 27(2), the details of that consultation have not been made known.

The Welsh Ministers must exercise their discretion under the 2005 Act either way. As the Supreme Court held in *R (Keyu) v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs* [2015] UKSC 69; [2016] AC 1355 per Lord Neuberger PSC at §§ 117-121, the duties to hold investigations into deaths, as required by article 2 ECHR, are now legislated for and there is no free-standing duty under the common law.

Conclusion

From what I have been told from victims, the sexual abuse on Caldey Island was undertaken at something of an industrial scale. To borrow a phrase from the Jimmy Saville abuse, it was done “in plain sight”. It is clear from my instructions that the Island became something of a hub for perpetrators of child abuse. With the settlement payments being made to victims and with the IICSA concentrating on issues in England, the victims from Caldey Island continue to be overlooked and ignored, and lessons from this terrible abuse on Welsh soil, risk never be learnt. Victims are surprised and distressed as to the Welsh Government’s apparent vehement opposition to any such inquiry, which of course only further fuels their suspicions as to institutional ‘cover up’ and their determination to try to seek proper justice.

Yours faithfully

Watkins and Gunn

[Redacted contact information]

P-05-954 Petition for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into the historic child abuse on Caldey Island, Correspondence – Caldey Island Victims Campaign Coordinator to Committee, 29.06.20

Dinah Mulholland: Caldey Island Victims Campaign Coordinator

Supporting Statement for Petition P-05-954 calling for a public inquiry by the Welsh Government into historic child abuse on Caldey Island.

I was the Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Ceredigion in the General Elections of 2017 and 2019. In that capacity I have been working with Kevin and Carol O'Connell, and with Ben Lake MP, in support of the Caldey Island Victims Campaign since June 2019. For the last 6 months I have had the voluntary role of coordinator for the campaign.

I believe that in acting to protect children and other vulnerable groups from harm it is necessary to act on the precautionary principle. I do not consider that the Abbot and monks of Caldey Island, despite acknowledging that abuse did take place, and do not appear to have an accountable, independent and transparent safeguarding system in place. I would therefore like to add a few short points about this in addition to those already raised within the other supporting statements for the petition.

1. Caldey is promoted and marketed, by the Island itself and via wider media, tourist websites and platforms, as a family & child friendly destination. A quick google search for Caldey throws up the following website listings for Caldey:
 - a. Letsgowiththechildren.com
 - b. Dayoutwiththekids.com
 - c. Kiddieholidays.com
 - d. The Tenby Visitor Guide listing categorises Caldey within their 'younger children' and 'older children' listings.
2. The Caldey Island website itself promotes an impression of a family & child friendly place, with photos of children feeding ducks, swings in the background of shots etc.
3. As well as children visiting the island on boat trips, children can also stay on the island at the St Philomena Retreat House which is available for short term holiday lets and retreats. The website however does say 'children must always be accompanied and supervised by an adult'.
4. In addition, properties on the island are available for longer term rentals to tenants.
5. The IICSA witness statement of the Archbishop of Wales outlined their 'in-house' safeguarding and other policies of the Catholic Church. These include:
 - a. Standards of conduct
 - b. Risk assessments
 - c. Peer support and appraisal
 - d. Disciplinary procedures and tribunals
 - e. Safeguarding
6. Of great concern is that there is no requirement for previous good conduct to enter the church as a monk.
7. Also of concern is that the Catholic Church also independently 'ministers to and manages individuals alleged to have caused harm'.
8. However, even within these guidelines the Catholic Church does not appear to have sufficient control over Caldey to ensure effective safeguarding on the island. In May 2019

ITV Wales reported that the Diocese of Menevia stated that Caldey was not their responsibility, however they had been advising the Abbey on their safeguarding policies and practices for the last 18 months. There has also been liaison between Pembrokeshire County Council and Dyfed Powys Police with the Abbey in order to improve safeguarding on the island. Bishop Tom Burns has commented on this process that “the Abbey has insisted on retaining its oversight of any specific cases, past, present, or in the future.”

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2019-05-14/calls-for-public-inquiry-into-historical-child-abuse-on-caldey-island-as-another-victim-comes-forward/>

9. During the last 14 years, 3 convicted child sex offenders have stayed or lived on Caldey Island.
 - a. Fr. John Shannon from 2008 to 2009
 - b. John Cronin in 2009
 - c. Paul Ashton from 2004 to 2011
10. I would also like to add that there may be a need to act with urgency if an inquiry into historic abuse on Caldey Island is to take place. IICSA received evidence of the destruction of records at Ampleforth and Downside Schools, and destruction of records may already have taken place on Caldey Island.

Dinah Mulholland 29.06.20

Agenda Item 4.1

P-05-931 Sun cream in schools

This petition was submitted by Leigh O'Connor having collected a total of 120 signatures.

Text of Petition

All children are at risk when in school or on school trips of sun burn. This not only has short term health issues but also long term such as skin cancer. This could easily be avoidable by allowing schools to apply sun cream with parents' consent. There are many options for this that do not involve the teachers having to touch the children if this is an issue.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East

Agenda Item 4.2

P-05-958 Recent Decisions Regarding AS Grades 2020

This petition was submitted by Sian Williams having collected a total of 219 signatures.

Text of Petition

A decision was recently made by Education Minister Kirsty Williams regarding AS Level qualifications 2020. The statement released says:

In summer 2021, current AS learners will have two options for their A level award. They will choose whether to:

- only sit the A2 units, with the A level grade based on their performance in the A2 units;
- or sit both the AS and A2 units. They will be awarded the best grade from either route.

However, this fails to take into consideration students that have worked extremely hard to achieve good predicted grades throughout the entirety of Year 12, and who were therefore prepared for upcoming exams, the first of which were due to begin in only four weeks from when this decision was made.

Year 12 would ordinarily contribute to 40% of the overall A Level grade.

If a student chooses to sit only A2 Units, as per the first option above, students will have worked tirelessly during Year 12 for 0% of their A Level grade, which has never previously been the case. This increases the pressure enormously for students continuing into Year 13 and contradicts the Minister's hope of a "fair system" that aids a student's "wellbeing". Further, this extra pressure will not be accounted for in the future when the 2021 cohort of students compete for jobs with students credited by the much fairer system that has previously always been in place.

The second route of taking both AS and A2 units in 2021 not only means that Year 12 again contributes nothing to the A Level grade overall, but does not decrease the already immense pressures of Year 13 either. Instead, it simply places the entirety of the pressure from both years and combines them for exams in the Summer 2021 exam series.

This is not fair, and we shouldn't be confused by the statements released into believing it is.

Additional Information

Education is a vital aspect of a student's life, especially those who have decided to continue with A Levels, all of which require great determination and hard work, in the hope of achieving grades needed for future plans.

This time is stressful enough for students.

The last thing we need is a rushed decision that is ultimately detrimental to our future plans.

Both pathways offered will be disadvantageous for students.

We ask for this decision to be adjusted to take every student into account.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd South
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-958
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/01684/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

1st June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 28 May regarding Petition P-05-958 Recent Decisions Regarding AS Grades 2020.

In my letter of 21st April, I responded in detail to the matters raised in the petition and the concerns of the learner who launched the petition that you recap at the start of your letter.

I feel it is important to reiterate that work already completed by Year 12 learners will not have been wasted, as it will have informed the AS grade that is calculated for the learner and this grade can subsequently be used for UCAS applications. This is why Qualifications Wales has prioritised calculation of a grade for these learners. The learning undertaken in Year 12 will also have served as important preparation for Year 13, allowing learners to develop knowledge, understanding and skills which will support A2 level work. My previous letter also outlined in detail why AS grades calculated this year cannot be used in the final A level determination, so I will not repeat those points again here.

In terms of the two specific additional questions you have raised following consideration of this petition;

Why it is not possible to use the ranking of students within each grade that is being produced to assign marks, in a similar way to the Universal Mark Scale?

Assigning a number to the rank order produced when all learners for one qualification are collected into one rank order and aligning it to a scale such as the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) assumes that the distribution of positions in the rank order is linear, when they may not be. The rank order tells us about the relative position of learners in relation to one another but it does not measure how far apart those learners are from one another. Therefore, there is

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Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

still no way of accurately estimating the marks that learners would have received just from the rank order.

What the views of teachers are on the measures that have been decided?

As you will appreciate, due to pandemic situation and the need to respond urgently to provide clarity to anxious learners, when the initial decisions on the approach to AS and A levels were made, there was limited time to engage with stakeholders. Although Qualifications Wales did test aspects of the decisions taken with several stakeholder groups such as Headteachers, Estyn and Unions. Since this time discussions have taken place with small groups of stakeholders and, whilst there are a variety of views, there is general support for this approach.

Responses to Qualifications Wales' recent consultation on arrangements for the 2020 examinations are currently being analysed. Although there was not a specific question related to this issue, some views have been shared which relate to the proposed methods and will be considered.

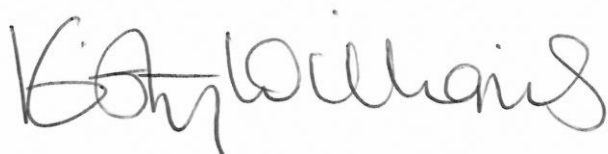
I am aware that learners in Year 10 and Year 12 who are halfway through their GCSE and A level courses are worried about how they will cover the work ahead of summer 2021. Understandably, teachers share these concerns and want to do their best for their learners. For these reasons we think adjustments to exams next summer may be needed.

We hope to share more information about summer 2021 as soon as possible. This will still be at a high level, but I want to reassure you that we are working hard to find answers to some very difficult questions.

I am sorry the learners signing the Petition are disappointed with the options we have arrived at in terms of AS Levels. I would of course have preferred that examinations went ahead in the normal way but clearly under the circumstances this was not a possibility and therefore my priority has been on ensure arrangements are in place to ensure the progression of learners.

To achieve this, I have worked very closely with Qualifications Wales and the WJEC to develop what we believe to be the most equitable and sensible approach under difficult circumstances to give certainty for learners at a time when it is most required.

Yours sincerely



Kirsty Williams AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

**P-05-958 Recent Decisions Regarding AS Grades 2020, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 09.07.20**

Thank you for this response. Although it is not the outcome that was desired, I understand the difficult situation facing the Education Minister.

The main concern that Year 12 learners now have is of exams and learning for Year 13. We want to feel that we will have sufficient time to be taught (and learn) the significant volume of content for the A2 units, and that measures will be taken to ensure that we are not disadvantaged from inconsistencies in online learning across the country e.g. time in school learning, internet access, private schools being taught despite the situation.

Thank you,

Sian

Agenda Item 4.3

P-05-962 An emergency amendment to extend age of entitlement to additional educational support from 25 to 26 and to define within Government guidance the Covid 19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance

This petition was submitted by Mike Charles having collected a total of 537 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call upon the Welsh Assembly to direct our Government to urgently amend the Learning and Skills Act to allow for funding within specialist colleges to be extended from the age of 25 to 26 for those affected by the Covid19 pandemic and to urgently scrap or amend its guidance document no: 221/2017 November 2017 so that the Covid19 crisis is defined as an exceptional circumstance.

Additional Information

The ALN Act 2018 will in time change the law but young people with complex needs cannot wait. Decisions about how long they may be supported in specialist colleges are being made today. Vital time is being lost by schools and colleges which may have closed or may be operating in a very limited way. For those with complex needs their critical access to learning resources are restricted. People with complex needs often learn from being out in the environment to develop critical life independence and employability skills. Outside is a classroom yet this is now being heavily restricted. Covid19 is altering this ability to learn in a material way.

Many parents and young people are fearful that this is one year open to them out of the 2 maximum. Although the guidance allows for exceptional circumstances it is interpreted in practice as limiting provision to two years and does not define adequately what would amount to an exceptional circumstance. The law however only allows for support up to 25 and this needs to urgently change to give those affected during this pandemic another chance. A chance for another less interrupted year.

This will otherwise manifest into skills being lost and consequent greater reliance on the state. That is not desirable for so many reasons not least the

fact that the loss of critical skills will be devastating for the individual involved.

We call upon our Government to help those most vulnerable. To support them for what they may have lost and give them another chance. A chance for an opportunity not to be missed. For many it is a difference between a life of dependence and independence.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KW/03386/20
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders MS,

30 June 2020

Thank you for your letter of 23 June following my response to your previous letter regarding the petition that seeks the Welsh Government to amend the law to extend age of entitlement to additional educational support from 25 to 26 years of age, and to define within Government guidance the COVID-19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance.

In light of the correspondence enclosed with your letter from the Petitioner, I have asked my officials to consider the issues raised in more detail so I can provide a more substantive response. I will therefore provide a response prior to recess unless you let me know that you need the reply by a specific date.

In the meantime, you may wish to be aware that, to date, four requests for an extension to an agreed programme of study have been submitted, which include reasons relating to the impact of COVID-19. These requests have been considered on a case by case basis and in line with the policy and I can confirm that they have been approved.

Yours sincerely,

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 4.4

P-05-906 Save Sam Davies Ward at Barry Hospital

This petition was submitted by UNISON having collected 1,858 signatures online and 11,407 on paper, a total of 13,265 signatures.

Text of Petition

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government, being the ultimate body responsible for the provision of health care in Wales, to stop the proposal of the Cardiff & Vale UHB to close the Sam Davies Ward, a 23 bedded older persons acute rehabilitation ward at the Barry Hospital, and to ensure that the Barry Hospital continues to provide Health Services to the public of Barry the largest Town in Wales.

Additional Information

The Sam Davies Ward is a 23 bedded older persons acute rehabilitation ward. The services include stroke rehabilitation, orthopaedic rehabilitation, and medical rehabilitation amongst other key health services. The ward also has two respite beds

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



DE MORGANNWG | SOUTH GLAMORGAN

Cyngor Iechyd Cymuned De Morgannwg
Canolfan Fusnes Pro Copy (Cefn)
Parc Tŷ Glas
Llanishen, Caerdydd
CF14 5DU

South Glamorgan Community Health Council
Pro Copy Business Centre (Rear)
Parc Tŷ Glas
Llanishen, Cardiff
CF14 5DU

01 April 2020

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders,

Re: Petition P-05-906 save Sam Davies Ward at Barry Hospital

Firstly, thank you for allowing the CHC additional time to provide you with information regarding the petition. This is appreciated especially at this difficult time.

Thank you for asking me to provide you with the background to the above which was part of a wider Cardiff & Vale University Health Board service change proposal, Frail Older People in the Vale of Glamorgan.

It may be helpful outlining the role of the Community Health Council when the NHS wants to change services.

Local health boards must plan, design and develop NHS services with local people, from the start. This helps to make sure local health services meet the existing and future needs of the people and communities they serve.

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Cadeirydd / Chair: **Mr Malcolm Latham, BA, MSc, MCMI, FIBMS**

Ffôn/Tel: [REDACTED]

Prif Swyddog / Chief Officer: Mr Stephen Allen, OStC, CSc, MCMI

Ebost/Email: [REDACTED]

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Health boards must tell their local CHC when they want to make a change that affects people. CHCs must work with their health board whenever it considers making a change.

CHCs represent the interests of public and patients. CHCs make sure that NHS organisations ask people for their views and listen to what they have to say.

What do we do when health boards tell us they want to make changes?

We ask the health board to show people:

- why it thinks things need to change;
- what it thinks will be better for patients if things change;
- who will be affected if things change; and
- How much it will cost.

We agree with our health board what they should do to help make sure people:

- know about their ideas for change; and
- Can easily share their views and ideas or ask questions.

What do we do once people have shared their views and ideas?

We look carefully at what people have said. Often, people have different views and ideas about what is best.

We make sure the health board:

- Has thought carefully about what everyone has said;
- Uses what people have said to change its plans where it needs to; and
- Answers the questions and any concerns people have raised.

Once we have done this, we need to decide if we agree with the changes the health board wants to make.

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When we decide, we must think about:

- the good and bad effects on all communities;
- how any particular groups of people may be affected;
- how services may be affected if things change or if they don't;
- whether there are things the health board can do to limit any bad effects; and
- How much things cost.

If we do not think the health, board has:

- given people enough chance to have their say;
- thought properly about what people have said;
- answered people's concerns; and
- come up with the best way forward

We will tell them and ask them to put it right.

If this does not work, we will ask the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services to decide what should happen.

Within South Glamorgan CHC, we have an agreed process with the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board on how to manage requests for service change. This uses a service change flowchart, setting out and following the Welsh Government guidance on engagement and consultation.

South Glamorgan CHC initially received the Service Change proforma, which was presented to our Service Planning Committee in 20 June 2019. Clinicians and Health Board managers were present at this this meeting to discuss the proposals. These proposals would see a change in the patient pathway for Frail Older People in the Vale of Glamorgan with services channelled into the University Hospital Llandough (UHL), and the subsequent closure of Barry Hospitals' Sam Davies Ward.

This service change was noted and sent to our CHC's Oversight, Scrutiny and Performance Group (OSPG), where our volunteer members would review the Health Boards proposal and engagement plan in more detail.

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This went to the OSPG on the 1st July 2019 for review, comment and amendment, in discussion with the Health Board's Medicine Clinical Board who were leading the service change.

It was agreed that public engagement on these proposals would run for eight weeks between 2nd September 2019 and 6th November 2019. This included a mid-point review to see if any additional actions were needed based upon initial engagement feedback. The CHC was aware that engagement had started slightly earlier than was originally agreed. This was to ensure scheduled meetings and advisory forums could review and feedback their findings.

Based upon initial engagement feedback, a list of frequently asked questions was published and circulated. During this period, it had become clear that there were very strong local concerns about Sam Davies ward. Local politicians, elected Assembly Members and Members of Parliament with these concerns, had contacted the CHC.

It became very clear that the focus was now on the future of the Sam Davies ward. This meant the other significant changes were being lost in the engagement process and subsequent discussions.

Previously, we had agreed with the Health Board to hold an open workshop for the public to hear about the proposals and provide their views. It is a well-known that some people feel uncomfortable putting their views forward in a large traditional public meeting. To overcome this, in the workshop there would be round table discussions allowing the public to engage in small groups with key Health Board staff, so everyone's voice could be heard.

During engagement, Unison had launched a petition calling upon the Welsh Government to intervene and were planning a mass rally in Barry to "Save Sam Davies Ward". It was now very clear that the proposed changes were controversial, and that many NHS staff were not supporting the change. The CHC wanted to ensure during the engagement process,

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that all those responding to the proposals were fully sighted of what was being proposed. To help with this, the public including staff were signposted to key organisations, on the Cardiff & Vale UHB website.

The CHC also visited the Sam Davies Ward with a local Assembly Member and spoke to several patients and staff. We listened and fed their concerns back to the Health Board. We also attended a local MP's meeting to answer questions on the process and urge people to respond as part of the engagement process.

The planned public workshop took place at the Memo Arts Centre Barry on the 23rd September 2019. The Health Board with the CHC attending led this. This workshop started well, and then the Health Board presentation went on too long (nearly 57 minutes). Consequently, by the time the public asked to be involved many had lost patience with the Health Board. The workshop then turned into a question and answer session with the Health Board in the public's view failing to adequately answer most questions. It was during this workshop that the Health Board suggested holding an additional evening meeting and would work with the CHC to facilitate this. At this stage, the Health Board had not discussed the proposal with the CHC.

Subsequently, a meeting was agreed with the CHC and this was held on the 30th October 2020 attended by 57 members of the public, this was one day before the engagement process closed. Considering the previous workshops problems, the CHC agreed to chair the meeting to ensure individuals were heard and their concerns answered. The local AM and CHC then asked for an extension to the closing date to allow people to send in responses, and a further week was given. The Health Board held its weekly Executive briefing session on the 4th November 2019 where they discussed possible ways forward.

The CHC requested the Health Board to provide copies of any correspondence, and feedback relating to the engagement. This would help the CHC to form a view based on the comments of the public and

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other key stakeholders. We received the requested documents although the Health Board did not provide a copy of the public petition.

The CHC internal OSPG met earlier than planned at 2pm the 20th November 2019, which was the earliest possible date due to CHC volunteer member availability. The OSPG did form a view on the proposals. Members felt the process was flawed because of the focus on the Sam Davies ward closure and not the complete Frail Older People in the Vale of Glamorgan pathway. To overcome this, the OSPG recommended further engagement or public consultation on the full proposals.

The Health Board met in Barry on 28th November 2019, where it announced that they were going ahead with the changes but removed the Sam Davies ward closure from their proposals. While this decision addressed local concerns and kept the ward open, the CHC immediately raised a serious concern that it had not been given the chance to formally respond to the engagement period as laid out in the Welsh Government guidance. In addition, if the patient pathway was changing, how would the Sam Davies ward now fit into the new plans? While the Health Board recognised our concerns, it went on to approve the change. The Health Board would only revisit this decision if the CHC had alternative proposals.

The CHC Executive Committee met in public on the 10th December 2019 in Barry and based upon public feedback and our own concerns decided the Health Board appeared to be circumnavigating engagement guidelines and the agreed process.

In our letter to the Health Board following the meeting, the CHC called for a full public consultation on the published proposals. This would allow the Health Board to further reflect and obtain public approval for their revised proposals. The Health Board rejected our request to move to public consultation. This was because in their view they thought most respondents supported the direction of travel for this service change, because the Sam Davies ward closure had now been removed completely

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F.R.C.P.S.(BW), F.R.C.P.S.(BX), F.R.C.P.S.(BY), F.R.C.P.S.(BZ), F.R.C.P.S.(CA), F.R.C.P.S.(CB), F.R.C.P.S.(CC), F.R.C.P.S.(CD), F.R.C.P.S.(CE), F.R.C.P.S.(CF), F.R.C.P.S.(CG), F.R.C.P.S.(CH), F.R.C.P.S.(CI), F.R.C.P.S.(CJ), F.R.C.P.S.(CK), F.R.C.P.S.(CL), F.R.C.P.S.(CM), F.R.C.P.S.(CN), F.R.C.P.S.(CO), F.R.C.P.S.(CP), F.R.C.P.S.(CQ), F.R.C.P.S.(CR), F.R.C.P.S.(CS), F.R.C.P.S.(CT), F.R.C.P.S.(CU), F.R.C.P.S.(CV), F.R.C.P.S.(CW), F.R.C.P.S.(CX), F.R.C.P.S.(CY), F.R.C.P.S.(CZ), F.R.C.P.S.(DA), F.R.C.P.S.(DB), F.R.C.P.S.(DC), F.R.C.P.S.(DD), F.R.C.P.S.(DE), F.R.C.P.S.(DF), F.R.C.P.S.(DG), F.R.C.P.S.(DH), F.R.C.P.S.(DI), F.R.C.P.S.(DJ), F.R.C.P.S.(DK), F.R.C.P.S.(DL), F.R.C.P.S.(DM), F.R.C.P.S.(DN), F.R.C.P.S.(DO), F.R.C.P.S.(DP), F.R.C.P.S.(DQ), F.R.C.P.S.(DR), F.R.C.P.S.(DS), F.R.C.P.S.(DT), F.R.C.P.S.(DU), F.R.C.P.S.(DV), F.R.C.P.S.(DW), F.R.C.P.S.(DX), F.R.C.P.S.(DY), F.R.C.P.S.(DZ), F.R.C.P.S.(EA), F.R.C.P.S.(EB), F.R.C.P.S.(EC), F.R.C.P.S.(ED), F.R.C.P.S.(EE), F.R.C.P.S.(EF), F.R.C.P.S.(EG), F.R.C.P.S.(EH), F.R.C.P.S.(EI), F.R.C.P.S.(EJ), F.R.C.P.S.(EK), F.R.C.P.S.(EL), F.R.C.P.S.(EM), F.R.C.P.S.(EN), F.R.C.P.S.(EO), F.R.C.P.S.(EP), F.R.C.P.S.(EQ), F.R.C.P.S.(ER), F.R.C.P.S.(ES), F.R.C.P.S.(ET), F.R.C.P.S.(EU), F.R.C.P.S.(EV), F.R.C.P.S.(EW), F.R.C.P.S.(EX), F.R.C.P.S.(EY), F.R.C.P.S.(EZ), F.R.C.P.S.(FA), F.R.C.P.S.(FB), F.R.C.P.S.(FC), F.R.C.P.S.(FD), F.R.C.P.S.(FE), F.R.C.P.S.(FF), F.R.C.P.S.(FG), F.R.C.P.S.(FH), F.R.C.P.S.(FI), F.R.C.P.S.(FJ), F.R.C.P.S.(FK), F.R.C.P.S.(FL), F.R.C.P.S.(FM), F.R.C.P.S.(FN), F.R.C.P.S.(FO), F.R.C.P.S.(FP), F.R.C.P.S.(FQ), F.R.C.P.S.(FR), F.R.C.P.S.(FS), F.R.C.P.S.(FT), F.R.C.P.S.(FU), F.R.C.P.S.(FV), F.R.C.P.S.(FW), F.R.C.P.S.(FX), F.R.C.P.S.(FY), F.R.C.P.S.(FZ), F.R.C.P.S.(GA), F.R.C.P.S.(GB), F.R.C.P.S.(GC), F.R.C.P.S.(GD), F.R.C.P.S.(GE), F.R.C.P.S.(GF), F.R.C.P.S.(GG), F.R.C.P.S.(GH), F.R.C.P.S.(GI), F.R.C.P.S.(GJ), F.R.C.P.S.(GK), F.R.C.P.S.(GL), F.R.C.P.S.(GM), F.R.C.P.S.(GN), F.R.C.P.S.(GO), F.R.C.P.S.(GP), F.R.C.P.S.(GQ), F.R.C.P.S.(GR), F.R.C.P.S.(GS), F.R.C.P.S.(GT), F.R.C.P.S.(GU), F.R.C.P.S.(GV), F.R.C.P.S.(GW), F.R.C.P.S.(GX), F.R.C.P.S.(GY), F.R.C.P.S.(GZ), F.R.C.P.S.(HA), F.R.C.P.S.(HB), F.R.C.P.S.(HC), F.R.C.P.S.(HD), F.R.C.P.S.(HE), F.R.C.P.S.(HF), F.R.C.P.S.(HG), F.R.C.P.S.(HH), F.R.C.P.S.(HI), F.R.C.P.S.(HJ), F.R.C.P.S.(HK), F.R.C.P.S.(HL), F.R.C.P.S.(HM), F.R.C.P.S.(HN), F.R.C.P.S.(HO), F.R.C.P.S.(HP), F.R.C.P.S.(HQ), F.R.C.P.S.(HR), F.R.C.P.S.(HS), F.R.C.P.S.(HT), F.R.C.P.S.(HU), F.R.C.P.S.(HV), F.R.C.P.S.(HW), F.R.C.P.S.(HX), F.R.C.P.S.(HY), F.R.C.P.S.(HZ), F.R.C.P.S.(IA), F.R.C.P.S.(IB), F.R.C.P.S.(IC), F.R.C.P.S.(ID), F.R.C.P.S.(IE), F.R.C.P.S.(IF), F.R.C.P.S.(IG), F.R.C.P.S.(IH), F.R.C.P.S.(II), F.R.C.P.S.(IJ), F.R.C.P.S.(IK), F.R.C.P.S.(IL), F.R.C.P.S.(IM), F.R.C.P.S.(IN), F.R.C.P.S.(IO), F.R.C.P.S.(IP), F.R.C.P.S.(IQ), F.R.C.P.S.(IR), F.R.C.P.S.(IS), F.R.C.P.S.(IT), F.R.C.P.S.(IU), F.R.C.P.S.(IV), F.R.C.P.S.(IW), F.R.C.P.S.(IX), F.R.C.P.S.(IY), F.R.C.P.S.(IZ), F.R.C.P.S.(JA), F.R.C.P.S.(JB), F.R.C.P.S.(JC), F.R.C.P.S.(JD), F.R.C.P.S.(JE), F.R.C.P.S.(JF), F.R.C.P.S.(JG), F.R.C.P.S.(JH), F.R.C.P.S.(JI), F.R.C.P.S.(JJ), F.R.C.P.S.(JK), F.R.C.P.S.(JL), F.R.C.P.S.(JM), F.R.C.P.S.(JN), F.R.C.P.S.(JO), F.R.C.P.S.(JP), F.R.C.P.S.(JQ), F.R.C.P.S.(JR), F.R.C.P.S.(JS), F.R.C.P.S.(JT), F.R.C.P.S.(JU), F.R.C.P.S.(JV), F.R.C.P.S.(JW), F.R.C.P.S.(JX), F.R.C.P.S.(JY), F.R.C.P.S.(JZ), F.R.C.P.S.(KA), F.R.C.P.S.(KB), F.R.C.P.S.(KC), F.R.C.P.S.(KD), F.R.C.P.S.(KE), F.R.C.P.S.(KF), F.R.C.P.S.(KG), F.R.C.P.S.(KH), F.R.C.P.S.(KI), F.R.C.P.S.(KJ), F.R.C.P.S.(KK), F.R.C.P.S.(KL), F.R.C.P.S.(KM), F.R.C.P.S.(KN), F.R.C.P.S.(KO), F.R.C.P.S.(KP), F.R.C.P.S.(KQ), F.R.C.P.S.(KR), F.R.C.P.S.(KS), F.R.C.P.S.(KT), F.R.C.P.S.(KU), F.R.C.P.S.(KV), F.R.C.P.S.(KW), F.R.C.P.S.(KX), F.R.C.P.S.(KY), F.R.C.P.S.(KZ), F.R.C.P.S.(LA), F.R.C.P.S.(LB), F.R.C.P.S.(LC), F.R.C.P.S.(LD), F.R.C.P.S.(LE), F.R.C.P.S.(LF), F.R.C.P.S.(LG), F.R.C.P.S.(LH), F.R.C.P.S.(LI), F.R.C.P.S.(LJ), F.R.C.P.S.(LK), F.R.C.P.S.(LL), F.R.C.P.S.(LM), F.R.C.P.S.(LN), F.R.C.P.S.(LO), F.R.C.P.S.(LP), F.R.C.P.S.(LQ), F.R.C.P.S.(LR), F.R.C.P.S.(LS), F.R.C.P.S.(LT), F.R.C.P.S.(LU), F.R.C.P.S.(LV), F.R.C.P.S.(LW), F.R.C.P.S.(LX), F.R.C.P.S.(LY), F.R.C.P.S.(LZ), F.R.C.P.S.(MA), F.R.C.P.S.(MB), F.R.C.P.S.(MC), F.R.C.P.S.(MD), F.R.C.P.S.(ME), F.R.C.P.S.(MF), F.R.C.P.S.(MG), F.R.C.P.S.(MH), F.R.C.P.S.(MI), F.R.C.P.S.(MJ), F.R.C.P.S.(MK), F.R.C.P.S.(ML), F.R.C.P.S.(MN), F.R.C.P.S.(MO), F.R.C.P.S.(MP), F.R.C.P.S.(MQ), F.R.C.P.S.(MR), F.R.C.P.S.(MS), F.R.C.P.S.(MT), F.R.C.P.S.(MU), F.R.C.P.S.(MV), F.R.C.P.S.(MW), F.R.C.P.S.(MX), F.R.C.P.S.(MY), F.R.C.P.S.(MZ), F.R.C.P.S.(NA), F.R.C.P.S.(NB), F.R.C.P.S.(NC), F.R.C.P.S.(ND), F.R.C.P.S.(NE), F.R.C.P.S.(NF), F.R.C.P.S.(NG), F.R.C.P.S.(NH), F.R.C.P.S.(NI), F.R.C.P.S.(NJ), F.R.C.P.S.(NK), F.R.C.P.S.(NL), F.R.C.P.S.(NM), F.R.C.P.S.(NO), F.R.C.P.S.(NP), F.R.C.P.S.(NQ), F.R.C.P.S.(NR), F.R.C.P.S.(NS), F.R.C.P.S.(NT), F.R.C.P.S.(NU), F.R.C.P.S.(NV), F.R.C.P.S.(NW), F.R.C.P.S.(NX), F.R.C.P.S.(NY), F.R.C.P.S.(NZ), F.R.C.P.S.(OA), F.R.C.P.S.(OB), F.R.C.P.S.(OC), F.R.C.P.S.(OD), F.R.C.P.S.(OE), F.R.C.P.S.(OF), F.R.C.P.S.(OG), F.R.C.P.S.(OH), F.R.C.P.S.(OI), F.R.C.P.S.(OJ), F.R.C.P.S.(OK), F.R.C.P.S.(OL), F.R.C.P.S.(OM), F.R.C.P.S.(ON), F.R.C.P.S.(OO), F.R.C.P.S.(OP), F.R.C.P.S.(OQ), F.R.C.P.S.(OR), F.R.C.P.S.(OS), F.R.C.P.S.(OT), F.R.C.P.S.(OU), F.R.C.P.S.(OV), F.R.C.P.S.(OW), F.R.C.P.S.(OX), F.R.C.P.S.(OY), F.R.C.P.S.(OZ), F.R.C.P.S.(PA), F.R.C.P.S.(PB), F.R.C.P.S.(PC), F.R.C.P.S.(PD), F.R.C.P.S.(PE), F.R.C.P.S.(PF), F.R.C.P.S.(PG), F.R.C.P.S.(PH), F.R.C.P.S.(PI), F.R.C.P.S.(PJ), F.R.C.P.S.(PK), F.R.C.P.S.(PL), F.R.C.P.S.(PM), F.R.C.P.S.(PN), F.R.C.P.S.(PO), F.R.C.P.S.(PP), F.R.C.P.S.(PQ), F.R.C.P.S.(PR), F.R.C.P.S.(PS), F.R.C.P.S.(PT), F.R.C.P.S.(PU), F.R.C.P.S.(PV), F.R.C.P.S.(PW), F.R.C.P.S.(PX), F.R.C.P.S.(PY), F.R.C.P.S.(PZ), F.R.C.P.S.(QA), F.R.C.P.S.(QB), F.R.C.P.S.(QC), F.R.C.P.S.(QD), F.R.C.P.S.(QE), F.R.C.P.S.(QF), F.R.C.P.S.(QG), F.R.C.P.S.(QH), F.R.C.P.S.(QI), F.R.C.P.S.(QJ), F.R.C.P.S.(QK), F.R.C.P.S.(QL), F.R.C.P.S.(QM), F.R.C.P.S.(QN), F.R.C.P.S.(QO), F.R.C.P.S.(QP), F.R.C.P.S.(QQ), F.R.C.P.S.(QR), F.R.C.P.S.(QS), F.R.C.P.S.(QT), F.R.C.P.S.(QU), F.R.C.P.S.(QV), F.R.C.P.S.(QW), F.R.C.P.S.(QX), F.R.C.P.S.(QY), F.R.C.P.S.(QZ), F.R.C.P.S.(RA), F.R.C.P.S.(RB), F.R.C.P.S.(RC), F.R.C.P.S.(RD), F.R.C.P.S.(RE), F.R.C.P.S.(RF), F.R.C.P.S.(RG), F.R.C.P.S.(RH), F.R.C.P.S.(RI), F.R.C.P.S.(RJ), F.R.C.P.S.(RK), F.R.C.P.S.(RL), F.R.C.P.S.(RM), F.R.C.P.S.(RN), F.R.C.P.S.(RO), F.R.C.P.S.(RP), F.R.C.P.S.(RQ), F.R.C.P.S.(RR), F.R.C.P.S.(RS), F.R.C.P.S.(RT), F.R.C.P.S.(RU), F.R.C.P.S.(RV), F.R.C.P.S.(RW), F.R.C.P.S.(RX), F.R.C.P.S.(RY), F.R.C.P.S.(RZ), F.R.C.P.S.(SA), F.R.C.P.S.(SB), F.R.C.P.S.(SC), F.R.C.P.S.(SD), F.R.C.P.S.(SE), F.R.C.P.S.(SF), F.R.C.P.S.(SG), F.R.C.P.S.(SH), F.R.C.P.S.(SI), F.R.C.P.S.(SJ), F.R.C.P.S.(SK), F.R.C.P.S.(SL), F.R.C.P.S.(SM), F.R.C.P.S.(SN), F.R.C.P.S.(SO), F.R.C.P.S.(SP), F.R.C.P.S.(SQ), F.R.C.P.S.(SR), F.R.C.P.S.(SS), F.R.C.P.S.(ST), F.R.C.P.S.(SU), F.R.C.P.S.(SV), F.R.C.P.S.(SW), F.R.C.P.S.(SX), F.R.C.P.S.(SY), F.R.C.P.S.(SZ), F.R.C.P.S.(TA), F.R.C.P.S.(TB), F.R.C.P.S.(TC), F.R.C.P.S.(TD), F.R.C.P.S.(TE), F.R.C.P.S.(TF), F.R.C.P.S.(TG), F.R.C.P.S.(TH), F.R.C.P.S.(TI), F.R.C.P.S.(TJ), F.R.C.P.S.(TK), F.R.C.P.S.(TL), F.R.C.P.S.(TM), F.R.C.P.S.(TN), F.R.C.P.S.(TO), F.R.C.P.S.(TP), F.R.C.P.S.(TQ), F.R.C.P.S.(TR), F.R.C.P.S.(TS), F.R.C.P.S.(TT), F.R.C.P.S.(TU), F.R.C.P.S.(TV), F.R.C.P.S.(TW), F.R.C.P.S.(TX), F.R.C.P.S.(TY), F.R.C.P.S.(TZ), F.R.C.P.S.(UA), F.R.C.P.S.(UB), F.R.C.P.S.(UC), F.R.C.P.S.(UD), F.R.C.P.S.(UE), F.R.C.P.S.(UF), F.R.C.P.S.(UG), F.R.C.P.S.(UH), F.R.C.P.S.(UI), F.R.C.P.S.(UJ), F.R.C.P.S.(UK), F.R.C.P.S.(UL), F.R.C.P.S.(UM), F.R.C.P.S.(UN), F.R.C.P.S.(UO), F.R.C.P.S.(UP), F.R.C.P.S.(UQ), F.R.C.P.S.(UR), F.R.C.P.S.(US), F.R.C.P.S.(UT), F.R.C.P.S.(UU), F.R.C.P.S.(UV), F.R.C.P.S.(UW), F.R.C.P.S.(UX), F.R.C.P.S.(UY), F.R.C.P.S.(UZ), F.R.C.P.S.(VA), F.R.C.P.S.(VB), F.R.C.P.S.(VC), F.R.C.P.S.(VD), F.R.C.P.S.(VE), F.R.C.P.S.(VF), F.R.C.P.S.(VG), F.R.C.P.S.(VH), F.R.C.P.S.(VI), F.R.C.P.S.(VJ), F.R.C.P.S.(VK), F.R.C.P.S.(VL), F.R.C.P.S.(VM), F.R.C.P.S.(VN), F.R.C.P.S.(VO), F.R.C.P.S.(VP), F.R.C.P.S.(VQ), F.R.C.P.S.(VR), F.R.C.P.S.(VS), F.R.C.P.S.(VT), F.R.C.P.S.(VU), F.R.C.P.S.(VV), F.R.C.P.S.(VW), F.R.C.P.S.(VX), F.R.C.P.S.(VY), F.R.C.P.S.(VZ), F.R.C.P.S.(WA), F.R.C.P.S.(WB), F.R.C.P.S.(WC), F.R.C.P.S.(WD), F.R.C.P.S.(WE), F.R.C.P.S.(WF), F.R.C.P.S.(WG), F.R.C.P.S.(WH), F.R.C.P.S.(WI), F.R.C.P.S.(WJ), F.R.C.P.S.(WK), F.R.C.P.S.(WL), F.R.C.P.S.(WM), F.R.C.P.S.(WN), F.R.C.P.S.(WO), F.R.C.P.S.(WP), F.R.C.P.S.(WQ), F.R.C.P.S.(WR), F.R.C.P.S.(WS), F.R.C.P.S.(WT), F.R.C.P.S.(WU), F.R.C.P.S.(WV), F.R.C.P.S.(WW), F.R.C.P.S.(WX), F.R.C.P.S.(WY), F.R.C.P.S.(WZ), F.R.C.P.S.(XA), F.R.C.P.S.(XB), F.R.C.P.S.(XC), F.R.C.P.S.(XD), F.R.C.P.S.(XE), F.R.C.P.S.(XF), F.R.C.P.S.(XG), F.R.C.P.S.(XH), F.R.C.P.S.(XI), F.R.C.P.S.(XJ), F.R.C.P.S.(XK), F.R.C.P.S.(XL), F.R.C.P.S.(XM), F.R.C.P.S.(XN), F.R.C.P.S.(XO), F.R.C.P.S.(XP), F.R.C.P.S.(XQ), F.R.C.P.S.(XR), F.R.C.P.S.(XS), F.R.C.P.S.(XT), F.R.C.P.S.(XU), F.R.C.P.S.(XV), F.R.C.P.S.(XW), F.R.C.P.S.(XX), F.R.C.P.S.(XY), F.R.C.P.S.(XZ), F.R.C.P.S.(YA), F.R.C.P.S.(YB), F.R.C.P.S.(YC), F.R.C.P.S.(YD), F.R.C.P.S.(YE), F.R.C.P.S.(YF), F.R.C.P.S.(YG), F.R.C.P.S.(YH), F.R.C.P.S.(YI), F.R.C.P.S.(YJ), F.R.C.P.S.(YK), F.R.C.P.S.(YL), F.R.C.P.S.(YM), F.R.C.P.S.(YN), F.R.C.P.S.(YO), F.R.C.P.S.(YP), F.R.C.P.S.(YQ), F.R.C.P.S.(YR), F.R.C.P.S.(YS), F.R.C.P.S.(YT), F.R.C.P.S.(YU), F.R.C.P.S.(YV), F.R.C.P.S.(YW), F.R.C.P.S.(YX), F.R.C.P.S.(YY), F.R.C.P.S.(YZ), F.R.C.P.S.(ZA), F.R.C.P.S.(ZB), F.R.C.P.S.(ZC), F.R.C.P.S.(ZD), F.R.C.P.S.(ZE), F.R.C.P.S.(ZF), F.R.C.P.S.(ZG), F.R.C.P.S.(ZH), F.R.C.P.S.(ZI), F.R.C.P.S.(ZJ), F.R.C.P.S.(ZK), F.R.C.P.S.(ZL), F.R.C.P.S.(ZM), F.R.C.P.S.(ZN), F.R.C.P.S.(ZO), F.R.C.P.S.(ZP), F.R.C.P.S.(ZQ), F.R.C.P.S.(ZR), F.R.C.P.S.(ZS), F.R.C.P.S.(ZT), F.R.C.P.S.(ZU), F.R.C.P.S.(ZV), F.R.C.P.S.(ZW), F.R.C.P.S.(ZX), F.R.C.P.S.(ZY), F.R.C.P.S.(ZZ)

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from the proposals. The CHC has seen no little evidence to support this assumption.

The CHC wrote to the Health Board again on 19th February 2020, seeking assurance on some of the key issues. The Health Board response suggests patients who would normally have gone to Sam Davies ward to access services would still be seen at the University Hospital Llandough. This was in the Health Board's original proposals and at that time would see the closure of Sam Davies ward or its role substantially changed.

The CHC is concerned about the patients who would normally access services via the Sam Davies ward and once directed to UHL, how these services would be delivered for them. We still have concerns about the long-term role of the ward and how any patient on the ward would be kept in the new pathway and receive timely care. The CHC is of the view that despite the concerns of the public and NHS staff, this could still lead to the closure of Sam Davies ward by stealth, because it is no longer used or part of the Frail Older People in the Vale of Glamorgan pathway.

I am very happy to provide the Petitions Committee with copies of all relevant documentation covering this service change. The CHC would be willing to meet the committee if this would help with your discussions.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Allen
Chief Officer

South Glamorgan CHC is the operational name of Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan CHC
CIC De Morgannwg yw'r enw gweithredol ar gyfer CIC Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg

Cadeirydd / Chair: Mr Malcolm Latham, BA, MSc, MCMI, FIBMS

Ffôn/Tel: [REDACTED]

Prif Swyddog / Chief Officer: Mr Stephen Allen, OStC, MCMI

Ebost/Email: [REDACTED]

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Agenda Item 4.5

P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled

This petition was submitted by Tracy Locke having collected a total of 121 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the Welsh Government to ensure that it is a legal requirement for all GP surgeries to have wide, adjustable treatment beds and hoists available for the use of disabled patients, so that they can be examined whenever there is need.

I was born with Spinabifida in 1970 and as a survivor of this condition I am paralysed from above the waist down and use a wheelchair full time. In 2017 I was diagnosed with stage 4 bladder cancer. It cannot be legally proven but it is my sincere belief that had I been examined earlier in the years before in my GP surgery on an a wide, adjustable treatment bed, perhaps with the aid of a hoist, then my cancer would not have been diagnosed at such an advanced stage. Since I've been looking into this issue, many disabled women have spoken to me about how they do not have equal access to smear tests because of this issue too. Often people think that disabled access is just about lifts and ramps but in health care, it is so much more complex. Let's join together to make access to health care equal for all people.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/01865/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

4 May 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your further letter of 1 April regarding Petition P-05-914; Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled. This is a follow up to my letter of 20 February.

As stated in my previous reply, guidance recommends a treatment room with a combined Changing Places Toilet and the facility to treat bariatric patients. The reason for the combined room is to maximize room utilisation. The design guidance sets out room requirements and sets out the best practice requirements.

Legislation to increase the provision of Changing Places Toilets is being considered by the Minister for Housing and Local Government. NHS facilities will need to consider compliance with any requirements that are introduced. As stated, this would be the best way to cover the requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 162
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 02.07.20**

To Whom It may Concern,

Thank you for forwarding Mr Gethings response to me about the availability of wide adjustable treatment beds and hoists in GP surgeries. I feel that the recommendation that bariatric treatment beds being available with a changing places toileting facility is a great idea.

However, I would be interested to know whether this facility would allow for a hoist to be made available? It is the lack of hoisting equipment and lack of a treatment bed that could be raised and lowered according to the needs of each disabled person that is important.

I hoped to hear Mr Gething mention the hoist and the ability to raise and lower the beds more specifically. These issues are life saving and can not be under estimated in terms of their importance.

The width of a bariatric treatment bed successfully allows for disabled people with paralysis to roll or be rolled as part of their examination and that is covered by Mr Gething's response. My question is, are mobility issues being catered for in the function of the bed and in the availability of hoisting equipment?

I am disappointed to think that this facility might only be kept for disabled and bariatric use too because I feel it could be utilised more flexibly. The facilities could be used for able bodied people most of the time and then switched to disabled or bariatric use as and when needed. In my opinion, the rigidity of this provision causes more problems for the GP surgeries than it solves but I'm open to being wrong about that.

I feel that anything other than such flexibility will cause there to be resistance in taking on such measures due to lack of space and money. I hope you will find my reflections helpful.

Kind Regards,

Tracy Locke BEd (Hons) PG Dip Couns MBACP (Accred) Adv Dip Counselling Supervision (NCS Accred)



Janet Finch Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament

Wednesday 08 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Subject: Petition P-05-914 Equal access to healthcare for disabled people

I write in response to your letter to June Milligan on 31 March in relation to the above petition that the Petitions Committee is considering. Please accept my apologies for the delay in coming back to the Committee with our response. Please also note that June Milligan is no longer the Wales Commissioner and we have an Interim Chair in post until the appointment of a new Commissioner.

Equal access to health care for disabled people is an ongoing concern for the Commission. Our Is Wales Fairer? 2018 report highlighted the unequal access to healthcare of disabled people, particularly for people with mental health conditions, Deaf people and people with a learning disability. In our recent submission to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on people on equality we raised concerns

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

Ff/T: 029 2044 7710

E: correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com

Bloc 1, Cainc D, Adeiladau Llywodraeth, Heol Santes Agnes,
Caerdydd, CF14 4YJ

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Cardiff, CF14 4YJ

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about the disproportionate impact on access to healthcare for disabled people due to cancellation of treatments and backlogs created by the pandemic.

With specific reference to the issues raised in Petition P-05-914 please find our advice below.

GP surgeries already have a number of legal duties in relation to equality legislation and the subject of the petition would fall under those existing duties.

GP surgeries provide a service and therefore must comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments found in section 20 of the Equality Act 2010. Our Code of Practice provides more detail and examples of how service providers may meet the duty and states:

“The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires service providers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled people can access services. This goes beyond simply avoiding discrimination. It requires service providers to anticipate the needs of potential disabled customers for reasonable adjustments.”

GPs surgeries are part of NHS Health Boards and therefore they must comply with the general public sector equality duty and specific Welsh duties. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

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- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Equality Act 2010 states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people

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from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favorably than others.

Guidance to support public bodies in Wales to comply with the public sector equality duty is available on our [website](#).

I hope that provides the information that your Committee requires in considering the petition. Should you require further information or advice please do not hesitate to come back to us.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Ruth Coombs

Head of Wales | Pennaeth Cymru

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

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**P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 09.07.20**

I don't know that I would amend what I said about Vaughan Gethings response as a result of reading Ruth Coombs response but her response indicates that GP's surgeries have a duty to take into consideration the specific issues that make accessing their services difficult for disabled people, into account.

The use of bariatric beds as I've said covers one aspect of my concerns, in that it allows for wide treatment beds to be provided. But hoists and the beds being adjustable in their height must be a feature in order for paralysed people to access essential physical examinations.

There are many different disabilities, that cause many different difficulties and I wonder whether if there were a way for all disabled people to feedback to their surgeries about their needs, then this would be the most effective way for this guidance to be fully complied with.

This could be very time-consuming and expensive but I feel there must be an openness for surgeries to listen to those needs and act upon them where they arise and become a problem.

I feel that Ruth Coomb's response was very helpful indeed and gives me hope for the quest towards full equality in health care in the future as long as needs are spoken, heard and met.

Tracy Locke

Agenda Item 4.6

P-05-926 To Provide a Chronic Fatigue Department in Wales

This petition was submitted by Marjorie Ann Lasebikan having collected a total of 155 signatures.

Text of Petition

There is no Chronic Fatigue Department in the whole of Wales! Chronic Fatigue is being overlooked or thought of as depression. I would like to see a Department set up with a view to individuals being assessed properly. General Practitioners say 'there is no cure' or 'you haven't been assessed'. Without a Chronic Fatigue department there can be no research into finding a cure or no means of being assessed.

I have suffered with this for 23years. The onset was after a week of high fever which showed as 104 on the 5th day. Little is known about Chronic Fatigue. I wrote up a Petition recently and collected 65 signatures with a view to setting up a department in Wales; it showed 20 had family members or friends suffering with it. It is so debilitating and such a waste of life. With an inability to think, concentrate or do anything physical without the need to go to bed afterwards. It can take days to overcome any effort however small.

I saw a woman being interviewed on television. She was at a Chronic Fatigue Clinic saying she had received a Myer's Infusion, which consists of Vitamins and Minerals, and felt so well she felt like her old self. It is not available on the NHS. I want to give it a try to see if this is the answer but need to find a private clinic to administer the Myer's Infusion. Last year I had a '5 day window' when I had clarity of thinking and energy. I do not know if this was because of taking a Vitamin B Complex capsule daily for a while. I saw a General Medicine doctor at Llandough Hospital recently [he sees many individuals with Chronic Fatigue] I told him of this infusion and he is interested in hearing the outcome of the procedure. I will report back to him. In the meantime, will you give your support to this Petition? It is essential to have some hope and the only way to achieve this is to have the right help in the first place. Not live a life unfulfilled. Thank you.

Additional Information

Concentration is poor; the ability to absorb information fully is difficult. To plan or organise things is impossible. To get excited is exhausting. Physical work cannot be undertaken without going to bed afterwards. To do anything strenuous can take a couple of days to recover and walking any distance is a problem. To sit in front of a computer for 30 minutes can result in energy draining away. Shopping is a big problem unless there is a buggy to use to take one around the store. It often ends up by shopping on line which is extremely tiring. I have always been an active person with many interests. There are days where I sit unable to do anything. Life is nothing but frustration.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

**P-05-926 To Provide a Chronic Fatigue Department in Wales, Correspondence
- Welsh Association for ME & CFS Support (WAMES) to Chair, 27.04.20**

Jan Russell, Chair,
Welsh Association for
ME & CFS Support (WAMES)
27th April 2020

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Dear Janet,

Thank you for seeking the views of WAMES on Petition P-05-926. We have a number of concerns and comments about the petition, the information supplied by the Health Minister and the current NHS service status.

1. Chronic Fatigue

Chronic fatigue is a symptom which is experienced by people with a wide range of illnesses. The petitioner is correct that if GPs, after doing basic blood tests, cannot find an obvious cause for the fatigue, they might assume the patient is depressed, even if they are not, leaving the patient to feel ignored & frustrated. Some patients with co-morbid depression will equally feel frustrated that their physical issues are being ignored. Some GPs have seen 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' as a convenient label to give patients complaining of excessive fatigue. This has sometimes led to people with MS, Parkinson's, MND etc. experiencing a delay in getting a diagnosis and beginning treatment.

I am unclear whether the petitioner believes they suffer from idiopathic chronic fatigue, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME). Usually people with ME don't like to talk about chronic fatigue because it is only one symptom, may not be the most debilitating and can be misleading. ME is a debilitating chronic multi system disease that affects the neurological, autonomic, immune, endocrine, cardiac and energy metabolism systems. The key characteristic of ME is Post Exertional Malaise (PEM) though this may not be the best terminology for it. Basically it is an abnormal physiological response to normal activity. Patients experience a significant and prolonged worsening of ME symptoms, and a reduction in the ability to function. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGlo1v7KVJQ>). Because of the presence of PEM, treatment for chronic fatigue in ME is significantly different than treatments for chronic fatigue in other medical conditions. It is therefore difficult to treat fatigue in ME in clinics set up to treat fatigue in e.g. pain conditions.

2. Diagnosis

GPs are often wary of giving a diagnosis for a condition they do not understand and cannot treat. We find they prefer to refer to a consultant, but unfortunately most consultants do not have the knowledge or interest to make a diagnosis of CFS or ME either. In addition the controversial *NICE guideline* for CFS/ME does not give a clear

picture of ME, making it difficult for doctors to accurately distinguish ME from other fatiguing conditions. The *NICE Guideline* is currently being revised, hopefully to recognise PEM as a defining feature and to recommend treatments & management strategies which acknowledge exercise or activity intolerance. The current guideline's treatment recommendations were based on research which has since been discredited (PACE trial). Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 crisis the completion date will inevitably be postponed well into 2021. There are a number of more evidence based diagnostic guides available, but none has the standing in the UK medical community that NICE has, though the *BMJ Good Practice guide* for CFS/ME does acknowledge the defining characteristic of PEM and the potential dangers of exercise programmes.

3. Current healthcare services for ME & CFS

Complementary therapies & alternative remedies - In the absence of understanding and advice from doctors we find that a number of patients are driven to seeking out alternative remedies for symptoms. Some of these can be very expensive, and while having some effect for some people with ME, are unlikely to treat the underlying dysfunction, so the patient continues to feel unwell, and financially poorer. The petitioner mentions the Myers Infusion, a cocktail of vitamins and minerals, as a potential treatment, which is not available on the NHS. A 2009 trial of Myers-type IV cocktail v placebo in Fibromyalgia patients found that no statistically significant differences were seen between *Intravenous micronutrient therapy* (IVMT) and placebo. I am not aware of any research trials in ME or chronic fatigue, but I suspect that it is unlikely it will become an option for the NHS in the foreseeable future.

ME/CFS Clinic - The ME/CFS clinic in North East Wales, mentioned by the Health Minister, offers management strategies based on the ACT protocol (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy). You need a diagnosis before referral, and I understand that not all people referred do in fact have an accurate diagnosis. The clinic is helpful for some mobile patients who can travel without causing a deterioration in symptoms. It has no medical input which means that medical problems can be overlooked. There is no follow up service and we know of one patient who went on to commit suicide. There is also no known outreach service, so it cannot help the many housebound patients in the area. The clinic is run by a part time clinical psychologist, who is heading for retirement, so it is uncertain how long it will be able to offer help to the small numbers it currently caters for.

Pain clinics - There are a few pain/ fatigue clinics that accept a small number of ME patients: Bronllys hospital (Powys), Llanfairfechan (Conwy), Cardiff and possibly the Swansea Bay pain service. Unfortunately they do not cater for people with exercise intolerance and PEM, so patients have to participate with care. The graded exercise/activity approach offered by some is the approach found to be unhelpful for people with ME. We have received a number of reports from people with ME who deteriorated markedly following attendance at the Llanfairfechain clinic. It has been impossible to find anyone within Betsi Cadwalladr UHB to take this seriously and the clinic continues to operate. We understand that pain clinics in Cardiff and Swansea Bay would like to extend their services to people with ME but do not have the capacity to do so, and have not received financial support for people with ME from their Health Boards. In addition the Bronllys hospital site is not accessible and

cannot accept people with limited function or in wheelchairs. The inpatient service is unsuitable for anybody who is not able to self-care or cook for themselves. The service's outreach fatigue and pain classes in different parts of Powys require a patient to be well enough to travel, so even *if* patients wished to attend, most couldn't.

Neuro clinics - Some years ago I asked Powys Neuro Clinics to accept patients with ME as it appeared to offer a suitable approach to helping patients by maximising function without causing harm, but I was told there was already provision for ME & CFS at the Bronllys pain & fatigue clinic!

EPP – some mobile people with ME have benefitted from attending Chronic Conditions Self-management courses, but as with the Pain clinics, fluctuating symptoms and travel induced relapses have meant not all can complete the course. Suitability is also dependent on the volunteer leader of each course understanding that exercise isn't good for everyone, so that pressure isn't applied on participants. There is an online self-management course in north Wales but we have received no reports of people with ME accessing it, maybe because people are wary, particularly in North Wales, of the NHS approach to ME. In 2018 Christine Roach, the programme manager for EPP, asked me to meet her to discuss setting up an ME specific self-management course, which I thought would be worthwhile, but that meeting has not materialised.

Technology – the pilot work done by Powys & AB HBs into digital support highlighted that those ME patients with acceptable broadband, technological know-how and ability to cope with screen time could benefit from online and video consultations, *if* there were experienced and/or sympathetic health professionals to interact with.

Patient information – I did some preparatory work on patient leaflets for the Implementation/ Advisory Group last year, but eventually was told that unless they followed the current *NICE guidelines* the leaflets would not be passed by the WG. This would not have been helpful for patients, so I stopped working on them.

Future Service Development for ME & CFS

The petitioner would like to see a Chronic Fatigue Department set up 'with a view to individuals being assessed properly.' Getting an accurate diagnosis is critical, but the *NICE guideline* and other sources suggest that diagnosis is possible in primary care, with only complex cases being referred on. Setting up a condition-specific service requires that GPs will refer people to it and HBs are convinced of the need. Also there would need to be many such services around Wales as travel can be highly detrimental for moderately and severely affected patients. There would also need to be equivalent paediatric services as the condition affects a significant number of children and young people as well.

For years WAMES has been asking for a commitment Wales-wide to:

- **Set up a rolling programme of training and awareness raising for GPs, paediatricians and other health professionals.** There have been many attempts by WAMES and others to encourage the existing training schemes to include ME, with little success.

- **Ensure that the trainers have experience of ME**, and are not just interested professionals sharing partial information or even misinformation. Also, it would be important to ensure that patient stories are included so a better understanding of the debilitating impact of the disease is communicated. [At the beginning of March *Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)* hosted a GP training session in Cardiff led by Dr Nina Muirhead, a dermatology surgeon in Buckinghamshire. Nina also has a part time role at Cardiff Medical School and has had ME for a few years. This was very well received by participants. There was no plan for further sessions to be offered elsewhere in Wales.]
- **Develop an e-learning programme for GPs.** Although the RCGP developed one some years ago ME specialists find it misrepresents ME as a psycho-social fatigue condition and is not based on the growing body of research which points to the presence of multi-system dysfunction. At the request of the HEIW Dr Muirhead is currently developing an e-learning module, although it is uncertain when this might be ready, or even *if* it will be acceptable to the Welsh Government, as it won't follow the *NICE guideline*.
- **Ensure people with a diagnosis of ME are recorded via SNOMED** so HBs can plan appropriate local services and make a case for a specialist service. It is estimated, based on studies by the ME/CFS Biobank at the *London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*, that there could be between 13,000 and 14,000 people of all ages in Wales with ME/CFS, 25% of whom are house or bed bound. It is clearly important to know where they are, what age and how severely affected they are (bed or housebound, or capable of part time work, with support).
- **Simple patient information, accessible online.** One of the plans for the patient info that I was writing for the *Advisory Group* was to put it online so patients could access it, even if their local GPs were not willing or able to advise them. It would appear that the only website where this could be done was as a link from the NHS Direct page on CFS/ME, and it was unclear who would be responsible for 'owning' and updating the leaflets. Individual HB websites are organised differently to each other and sometimes the only place they could host such patient leaflets would be on the pages of a specific service (if there were services for ME & CFS). Alternatively a charity could do it with NHS Wales endorsement, but WAMES doesn't unfortunately have the capacity to do this and we are not the only ME charity whose financial future is uncertain.
- **Identify GPs, paediatricians and consultants with a 'special interest' in ME and CFS**, provide them with training and support so they can establish a development strategy and services in their areas. Health Boards have named Clinical Leads in accordance with the 2014 *Task & Finish Group Report* but these are mostly therapists working in pain, or Board members with a largely administrative oversight of a range of conditions. Until there are 'clinical champions' in the Health Boards, speaking up for ME patients it is hard to see how services can develop in an appropriate way for each area of Wales.

Welsh Government initiatives for ME

WAMES has been involved with all the Welsh Government initiatives for ME & CFS over the years: the *Masterclasses* with poor uptake in 2002; the first *Task & Finish Group Report* in 2010; the second *Task & Finish Group Report* in 2014, the *T&FG*

Report Implementation Group 2014-2019. The *T&F Groups* covered ME, CFS, & Fibromyalgia (FM), which is a pain condition. While individual health professionals got involved in the initiatives, many had experience only of FM. Not all Health Boards have been consistently represented on the groups and most have not been prepared to commit any money or resources to help the ME/CFS/FM leads implement the recommendations of the 2014 Report.

The *Implementation Group* (renamed *Advisory Group*) has consisted of Welsh Government staff, therapists, patient reps and a few doctors. The doctors' experience has been largely in Fibromyalgia. The decision to merge the *Implementation/ Advisory Group* with other pain groups into a *Long Term Pain and Musculoskeletal Conditions Advisory Group* was mooted by Kevin Francis of the *Health Policy Directorate*, who has responsibility for all these conditions and was concerned about the lack of headway the ME, CFS & FM group had made with Health Boards.

The Health Minister is mistaken that 'this approach has received an overwhelmingly positive response from members of all the groups affected'. WAMES, Action for ME and the North East Wales ME/CFS clinic all expressed grave reservations that ME would get lost in a group of pain conditions, particularly if the name focuses on them. Kevin assures me that the name is a 'working title', but it is hard to see how the serious shortcomings in care for ME will be addressed alongside conditions that already have significant medical and clinical support.

Over the last 20 years the CE of the NHS and successive health ministers have requested feedback from Health Boards on the progress in implementing services. Not all Health Boards have responded and those that have, in my opinion, have shown little understanding of the reports' recommendations and little commitment to making service improvements. Unlike the Delivery Groups, the ME/CFS & FM Advisory Group has not been able to give directives, just recommendations, and has provided HBs with no money to fund any changes.

WAMES' role in future Welsh Government initiatives

Before Covid-19, WAMES was aware that we would have to make difficult decisions about what was a good use of our very limited finances and we have debated whether travelling to the new *Advisory Group* meetings would be worthwhile. What will happen to our financial situation and the launch of the new *LTP&MC Advisory Group* in the 'new Covid-19 world' remains to be seen. There may still be some value in having an input into developing strategies that encourage Health Boards to develop 'patient and professional education, effective diagnosis, self-management techniques' etc. but without the medical expertise supporting us it could be an uphill struggle to get noticed by health boards and persuade them to apply those strategies to ME.

In a world where shielding will have to continue for 'at risk' groups for an unknown length of time, it will not be possible for most of the WAMES team to leave home, let alone travel to meetings. Unfortunately video conferencing at the Welsh Government offices has not been very successful in the past. So there are a number of questions surrounding WAMES' continued involvement in Welsh Government initiatives for ME. What would make that worthwhile would be for ME to be taken seriously by the NHS

and Welsh Government as a condition in its own right and one which has more in common with some neurological conditions, than pain conditions.

I will be happy to supply more information about anything I have mentioned.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Russell

P-05-926 To Provide a Chronic Fatigue Department in Wales, Correspondence: Welsh Association of ME & CFS Support (WAMES) to Minister for Health and Social Service, 12.05.20

WAMES
The Coach House,
Frongôg
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
12 May 2020

Minister for Health & Social Care

cc Deputy Minister for Health & Social Care
Chief Executive for NHS
Chair Petitions Committee
Kevin Frances, Directorate for Health Policy

Dear Vaughan Gething,

Today, 12th May 2020 is International ME Awareness day. The WAMES blog and social media this week contains stories of the devastating effect ME has on people's lives. ⁽¹⁾

On behalf of people with ME and Covid-19 survivors WAMES asks that Wales develops a strategy to recognise and treat illnesses triggered by *all* viruses.

Today is also Day 51 of the Covid-19 lockdown in Wales. 2 months ago we could not have imagined that we would be drawing your attention to Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) in the middle of a pandemic!

We do so because over the last few weeks media and research reports ^(2,3,4,) have made it clear that a number of people who survived the SARS and MERS pandemics a few years ago did not recover, but went on to develop neurological and post-viral symptoms. For some this led to full blown neurological ME.

Concern has been raised by the NHS in Wales that "a national strategy for [Covid-19] rehab would be required. They claim provision is "patchy" and without help people's lives will be harmed.' ⁽⁶⁾ WAMES agrees, and has been calling for a national strategy for caring for ME and post-viral sufferers for many years.

Fortunately the professional group physios4me ⁽⁷⁾ have been quick to produce clear guidelines to enable doctors and therapists to identify and support patients with ongoing problems, to avoid the long term chronic condition of ME developing.

Many people with ME wish their doctors in the past had done this for them!

The physiotherapists have been guided by international research evidence on the nature of the dysfunction in ME and particularly the Workwell Institute's findings on exercise intolerance in ME. They have also drawn on the long clinical experience of Dr Charles Shepherd of the ME Association.

Unfortunately NICE has still to catch up, and due to the Covid-19 crisis the publication of the revised NICE guidelines for ME/CFS has been delayed, possibly well into next year.

It is good that the Welsh Government has 'announced an extra £10m to help people recovering from coronavirus.' It would also be good if money could be dedicated to ensuring that other people with post viral symptoms are well supported. It is too late for many who have already been harmed by neglect, disbelief, inappropriate advice and exercise therapy in Wales' fatigue and pain clinics, but future patients could be spared that. The paucity of testing for Covid-19 means that many in Wales could have had the virus and be unaware they might face a backlash in the future and won't be recognised as needing specialised advice.

People who already have ME are finding that catching Covid-19 leads to a relapse in symptoms. As people with ME have not been placed on the 'at risk' from Covid-19 list, this can cause added difficulties in gaining support as they continue to shield. **Is there a way that people with ME who are very ill can be placed on the 'at risk' list?**

Currently the Welsh Government has placed ME and CFS in an advisory group with pain syndromes, hoping to find ways to improve NHS handling of common issues: 'the need for patient and professional education, effective diagnosis, self-management techniques.'

WAMES believes this could mislead the health community into believing ME is a pain syndrome, and lead to ME being over looked, or worse, included in pain rehabilitation programmes, which have already caused such setbacks (and distress) for people with ME in the past. This approach fails to address the most pressing issues, that of the unique characteristic of ME - exercise intolerance and the post-exertional response (PEM) - and the lack of medical expertise in post viral conditions in general and specifically neurological ME, in Wales.

WAMES calls on the Welsh Government to lead the way in caring for ALL survivors of viruses, without discrimination.

Best wishes,

Jan

Jan Russell

Chair/ Cadeirydd,
Welsh Association of ME & CFS Support
Cymdeithas Cefnogi ME a CFS Cymru

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Refs

1. www.wames.org.uk
2. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24632783-400-could-the-coronavirus-trigger-post-viral-fatigue-syndromes/>
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/coronavirus-could-cause-secondary-illnesses-including-chronic/?fb>
4. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/coronavirus-could-leave-you-with-symptoms-of-post-viral-fatigue_uk_5eb3e88dc5b6526942a29dfc
5. <https://le.ac.uk/news/2020/may/coronavirus-me-risk>
6. Coronavirus: NHS faces 'massive' challenge helping patients recover.
www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52475139
7. www.physios4me.com

**P-05-926 To Provide a Chronic Fatigue Department in Wales, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 10.07.20**

I am still not satisfied that the problem is being treated as a separate case to the ME/CFS but am hopeful that future individuals will be looked at and taken seriously. I feel that I was not. Please see paragraph 1.

1. *1. 'It would also be good if money could be dedicated to ensuring that other people with post viral symptoms are well supported. It is too late for many who have already been harmed by neglect, disbelief, inappropriate advice and exercise therapy in Wales' fatigue and pain clinics, but future patients could be spared that.'* I would like to remind you that I have had chronic Fatigue for the past 23 years with no offer of help or referral to a Consultant. I reported to my GP with a very high temperature which I'd had for 5 days [31st May 1996] and it was noted that my temperature was 104!!! There would appear to be nowhere in Wales to send a patient to: or that is the case for those in South Wales. I feel that I have been badly let down. A new acquaintance says that she was!! Where? Why wasn't I?

2. *'On behalf of people with ME and Covid-19 survivors WAMES asks that Wales develops a strategy to recognise and treat illnesses triggered by all viruses.'*

I would think that as I did not show any signs of infection at the time [31st May 1996] that my high fever was due to a virus.

3. *'Concern has been raised by the NHS in Wales that "a national strategy for [Covid-19] rehab would be required. They claim provision is "patchy" and without help people's lives will be harmed.'* (6) *WAMES agrees, and has been calling for a national strategy for caring for ME and post-viral sufferers for many years.*

It has to be! To avoid the long term chronic condition of ME developing.

4. *'Fortunately the professional group physios4me (7) have been quick to produce clear guidelines to enable doctors and therapists to identify and support patients with ongoing problems. Many people with ME wish their doctors in the past had done this for them!*

With CFS [my case was not diagnosed as I am frequently told by my GP] you live a life that is an existence. The inability to function, think or concentrate is hard. To say you are not well and are unable to help with certain things is difficult for people to understand. I was always an active person and this inability to do anything for any length of time without suffering extreme tiredness for 3 to 4 days is an absolute misery. *I have not suffered with pain.*

5. *'WAMES believes this could mislead the health community into believing ME is a pain syndrome, and lead to ME being over looked, or worse, included in pain rehabilitation programmes, which have already caused such setbacks (and distress) for people with ME in the past. This approach fails to address the most pressing issues, that of the unique characteristic of ME - exercise intolerance and the post-exertional response (PEM) - and the lack of medical expertise in post viral conditions in general and specifically neurological ME, in Wales.*

This is exactly the problem!

I looked up PEM and this is the outcome.

What does PEM feel like?

PEM is not just **a feeling** of severe fatigue; it is **a full-body assault**. **A** physician with CFS says, "My **PEM feels like a** worsening of my baseline CFS symptoms - more fatigue, headaches, neck/ back muscle achiness (but not outright pain), problems concentrating/ reading

[PEM Series - Solve ME/CFS initiative](#)

*Post-exertional malaise (**PEM**) is the worsening of symptoms following even minor physical or mental exertion, with symptoms typically worsening 12 to 48 hours after activity and lasting for days or even weeks.*

Agenda Item 4.7

P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19

This petition was submitted by Profs Jane Henderson & Karin Wahl-Jorgensen having collected a total of 414 signatures.

Text of Petition

They gave their lives to save ours. We call on the Welsh Government to fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19. The average simple funeral costs £4000. We ask the Welsh Government to ensure that bereaved families immediately have access to the funds to pay for funeral costs.

Additional Information

Source for funeral cost

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/help-paying-for-a-funeral>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/03453/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@llyw.cymru

29 June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2020 and sharing with me the further comments the committee received from the petitioners and their personal stories referred to.

You have asked me to comment on a further three points. I believe the comments made by the petitioners about entitlements for families of locum and agency staff and non-British citizens refer to their eligibility for this scheme. I can confirm that the eligibility criteria drafted for the Death in Service Scheme I announced, have been drafted to be as inclusive as possible so locum, agency and non-British citizens working in the NHS will be able to put forward a claim.

In relation to your second point I am of the view that the Welsh Government should not specifically set aside a specific expense for funeral costs from the £60,000 as this should be for the discretion of bereaved families on how the money should be used.

Finally, I have agreed that the funding being made available from the UK Government will fund a death in service scheme for health and social care in Wales. Whilst it is not within my gift to consider how such a scheme can be extended or funded for other key workers in Wales you may wish to contact my fellow Ministers to seek their views.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 07.07.20

Dear Petitions Committee

Can I thank you first for the time and care you put into your initial deliberations and for asking the minister to further consider the situation.

I can see from The Minister's response that he has confirmed that 'families of locum, agency and non-British citizens working in the NHS will be able to put forward a claim.' I am assuming that also means their claim will be considered which is very good news and thank you, this does indeed address one point of the petition.

The second issues addresses the £60k death in service benefit and the request in the petition for a separate fund to be created to pay for funerals. I appreciate how, from a ministerial position, it is easy to assume that the £60,000 should leave a family assured about funeral expenses. However I remain of the opinion that these matters should be considered as distinct issues. For any family who loses a loved one, the time and ability that they have to think and act is curtailed by their bereavement. It may be hard for families to decide how best to allocate the death in service benefit straight away, for example considering a single parent who was the victim of covid there might be issues for the family of moving house and or school, having to find transport for children, additional childcare as well as all the loss of income down the line and the consequent impact on a family's chances and opportunities. This is a very difficult point in life for people to compare short and long term decisions: will they be able to afford the funeral, what other costs, might they need to cover from the sum? If think it is highly unlikely most families will be able to make the application for the £60,000 and receive it in time to pay for a funeral. If you don't have much money then you are not able to just carry costs of three to four thousand pounds forward in the hope you will successfully get the grant later.

The point of the petition is that although the sum of money being asked for is miniscule in government expenditure terms it would have a massive impact on people's lives at a critical moment. We the public don't know how many NHS staff have died in Wales: in April the HSJ journal for health care leaders estimated the number at nine. Each life lost is one too many. For people who have lost their loved ones from covid whilst working for the NHS this petition aims to offer a guarantee that the government will cover the cost of a funeral with no complex applications and no waiting for a decision, they can grieve and put their energy into coping. These staff have died protecting us, their funeral costs are a direct cost of protecting us. We are not in England we don't have to be limited by their rules in this area, we can and should show that Wales is a compassionate place.

The minister states that the petition committee can contact fellow ministers to support death in service benefit scheme (and funeral costs), for health and social care workers. It would be good if he would add his support to such a claim.

I have come back again and ask the petition committee to support me on this, this is a chance for Wales to do better. This is not a huge cost for the government, but a huge support for families.

Thanks you for visiting this issue again

Jane Henderson

On behalf of the petitioners

Agenda Item 4.8

P-05-964 Extend covid-19 financial support and paid leave to vulnerable and pregnant NHS wales bank workers

This petition was submitted by David Adam Clarke having collected a total of 174 signatures.

Text of Petition

NHS wales bank workers who are vulnerable, require safeguarding or are over 28 weeks pregnant might not be given the same financial support or safeguarding as full time NHS staff by health boards. Some of these NHS wales bank HCA's, Nurses, Midwives et al. have worked for the NHS for years and this is their primary income. The vulnerable and pregnant could be facing working or receiving no pay, and that is subject to them being offered alternative work.

Please support the NHS bank workers

Additional Information

The equality act 2010 protects vulnerabilities (under disability) as well as pregnancy and maternity against discrimination.

The health and safety at work act 1974 along with management of health and safety at work 1999 dictates that risk assessments must be carried out in regards to NHS bank workers in relation to the Covid-19 crisis. Where those nhs bank staff cannot work or be offered alternative work, they may be left without an income.

In these unprecedented times the Welsh Parliament, NHS wales and relevant health boards should ensure financial support and safeguarding to NHS bank workers. Currently NHS bank workers in wales might only have the choice to work or stay at home with no financial support.

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/bank-workers>

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/3896/2020-04-21-occupational-health-advice-for-employers-and-pregnant-women.pdf>

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/nhs-southmead-hospital-furlough-coronavirus-4082655>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd South
- North Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/03028/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

29 June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 11 May on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding financial support and paid leave for vulnerable and pregnant NHS Wales bank workers.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. I do recognise that the current guidance from NHS Employers to those bank workers being asked to shield has an adverse impact on this small group of workers. I have asked my officials to look into this and consider it further.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 4.9

P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent

This petition was submitted by Ebbw Fawr Business Community having collected a total of 1,332 signatures on paper.

Text of Petition

The people below would like to raise their concern about the poor public transport within Blaenau Gwent. This has led to residents having difficulty travelling to their place of work. They also experience problems attending Hospitals and Doctors for medical attention. The cut backs have also made travelling at best time consuming and arduous and in some cases impossible.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East



19.03.20

**TRAFNIDIAETH
CYMRU
TRANSPORT
FOR WALES**

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Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

19 March 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the petition of public transport in Blaenau Gwent.

Regarding services on the Ebbw Vale Line, we're committed to increasing train services and working with stakeholders to see the rail link between Ebbw Vale and Newport restored. Installing this link requires infrastructure improvements to allow more trains to travel in both directions on the line. Securing 2 services an hour on the length of the Ebbw Line will require infrastructure improvements and re-signalling work to be undertaken by Network Rail to allow more trains to run back and for along the line. We are engaging closely with all parties on these aspects.

Under instruction from Welsh Government, we're currently undertaking a study focusing on these commitments, which aims to understand the opportunities and barriers to run up to four trains per hour on this line, and who can unlock them. This initial study recently concluded and is with Welsh Government and its partners for review.

All of the services from Ebbw Vale to Cardiff Central have been provided with newer refurbished trains with electronic information and will be provided with power sockets by 2020. New DEMU Vehicles will be introduced during 2022 with total capacity of 425. These brand new trains will also feature level boarding, air conditioning and more space for bicycles.

There will be an increase in capacity between Ebbw Vale and Cardiff Central with an increase of 180 in total capacity towards Cardiff in the morning peak in December 2022.



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Lywodraeth Cymru
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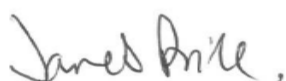
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Floor, South Gate House Wood St, Cardiff, CF10 3EW

There will be an increase in capacity between Ebbw Vale and Newport, with 150 more seats towards Newport in the morning peak in December 2022, and 300 more seats from Newport in the evening peak in December 2022.

Stations will undergo a refresh and clean, and there will be free Wi-Fi by December 2020 and improved CCTV by December 2022.

Welsh Government and TfW have been working with colleagues in Blaenau Gwent to establish an Integrated Responsive Transport service pilot. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is working with community organisations, commercial and community transport operators to assess how demand responsive transport could help address social isolation and help get people to get to employment cost effectively. Although there is a good bus service along key routes during core hours, a demand responsive service could help connect people in estates out of easy reach of bus services, and those that need transport outside core hours, for instance to work an early or late shift. The council has had a great response from the community, and we hope to be able to start consulting on proposals for services shortly for live operation in late 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Price," with a comma at the end.

James Price
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 08.07.20

I welcome the improvements to the Train Service into Blaenau Gwent Stations. But this response does not address the Public Transport issues that the Petition raised. The concept of a Integrated Responsive Transport system to my knowledge was first raised in 2019 and is not due to be in operation until late 2020.

I would like to draw the Petition Committee attention to the following:

A4046 Cwm to Aberbeeg Road

This road now has a weight restriction due to a landslip earlier in the year. All Buses now have to detour via Brynmawr to make the journey to Ebbw Vale and Cwm.

Heads of the Valleys : Isolation Fear over road widening plan

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-51723736>

This will mean Beaufort near Brynmawr could see more traffic as drivers try to get on the Heads of the Valley road at Rassau and off it at Garnylan.

Historically.

I have read a number of Reports \ Strategies dating back to the early 1980's all of these Reports \ Strategies highlight Infrastructure (Public Transport) as being one of the main requirements to Economic Regeneration, so we are 40 Years on with no improvement.

Economic Regeneration

I have read all the documents produced by all bodies involved in Economic Regeneration within Blaenau Gwent. All of these bodies highlight Infrastructure (Public Transport) as being one of the main requirements to Economic Regeneration.

I am also rather concerned to the number of Bodies involved in Regeneration:

Valleys Taskforce.

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board

Town Centre Regeneration Taskforce

Blaenau Gwent Economic and Regeneration Department

.....

to name a few.

Blaenau Gwent Council

I am disappointed that Blaenau Gwent Council have not responded to the request for information.

Finally

Could the Petition Committee tell us who are ultimately responsible for Public Transport within Blaenau Gwent.

Many thanks
Steven Roberts

Agenda Item 4.10

P-05-955 Objection to proposal by Costain to implement Option B in the rerouting of the A465 at Brynmawr

This petition was submitted by Heads Of the Valley Petition Group having collected a total of 1,128 signatures.

Text of Petition

For the reasons below, we the undersigned, object to the proposal by Costain to implement Option B in the rerouting of the A465 at Brynmawr. Costain favour option B and intend that it will be implemented in April 2020. There will be no entrance or exit to or from Brynmawr from the Western Valley. Option B will dramatically increase the already excessive volume of traffic through Beaufort Village and Brynmawr as drivers heading West have no way of getting onto A465 from the Western Valley areas. ,e.g Nantyglo, Blaina, Abertillery, Aberbeeg, LLanhilleth, Blaenavon etc. There will be implications for traders in both Beaufort and Brynmawr as the already struggling towns will be bypassed by traffic travelling from the East. The environmental impact on both towns will also be unacceptable due to the increased carbon emissions from slow moving traffic which, during peak times is already at a standstill. The road through Beaufort has a 7.5 tonne weight restriction; however, heavy traffic in excess of 7.5 tonnes will not be able to access the A465 without travelling through Beaufort and Brynmawr Public transport will have a detour of up to 6 miles to access the A465.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East

Agenda Item 4.11

P-05-968 Pay Coronavirus grants to all businesses eligible for Small Business Rate Relief same as rest of UK

This petition was submitted by Simon Hill having collected a total of 360 signatures.

Text of Petition

On 17th March 2020 the Chancellor announced that all small businesses with fewer than 9 employees and eligible for small business rate relief would receive a grant of £10,000 (the Small Business Grants Fund).

On 8th April, the Welsh Government published revised guidance in relation to self-catering accommodation. This change of policy has excluded thousands of genuine businesses from receiving grant funding that they desperately need as they have no income during the Coronavirus crisis.

Additional Information

The Welsh Government have forced all holiday accommodation businesses to close due to the Coronavirus outbreak and all bookings have been cancelled. These businesses now have no income but still have the outgoings of financing and maintaining the property, which could cause great financial hardship.

In the rest of the UK, all local authorities have paid the grant funding to self-catering holiday lets. It's very unfair that these centrally funded grants are not being applied equally across the country and contrary to the Chancellor's promise.

This change in policy is already causing issues in the area as can be seen in this local press article: <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/second-home-crackdown-hitting-genuine-18139173>

Please sign to request that the Welsh Government rescind this change of policy and distribute the Small Business Grant Fund fairly as has been done in the rest of the UK.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales

Agenda Item 4.12

P-05-973 Reopen barbers and hairdressers as long as they have strict social distancing measures in place

This petition was submitted by Luke Fussell having collected a total of 118 signatures.

Text of Petition

We have been in lockdown for over 2 months now. Some of us even longer if they chose to self-isolate early. With the recent opening of garden centres we should now be discussing the reopening of barber shops and hairdressers providing social distancing measures are taken seriously.

Additional Information

Appearance has always been very important but in this day and age it is even more so. When people don't look good they don't feel good and with us all being locked indoors we could all do with at least feeling good about ourselves. Mental health issues have grown dramatically over the last few years and one reason why is because of the growing need to look good in order to feel good and with the current lockdown mental health issues are bound to be becoming more common.

Social distancing measures in these establishments should include shops being appointment only, and only allowing limited amount of staff in per day, there should be a limited number of people in at any one time, no gathering or queueing outside, all tools utensils and chairs should be thoroughly cleaned between each customer, gloves and masks should be worn and chairs should be 2 metres away. Any other measures can be put in place to ensure safety also but these scruffy heads must be no more.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport West
- South Wales East