

P-05-971 Relax travel restrictions imposed by Covid 19 legislation to allow travel within Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.06.20

The First Minister states in his response of the 16th June 2020 that the periodic reviews take into account however he not published the evidence that he is relying on.

He states that "A key purpose of the requirement to stay local is to prevent the spread of the virus between communities." However, the virus was already widely distributed across Wales at the early stages of the pandemic.

Furthermore, there was always the ongoing potential for geographic viral spread through the food and goods distribution networks, with the potential for contamination in all retail premises. These inherent risks are potentially far higher than a person walking in the countryside although many footpaths, national parks and other spaces were closed down.

The risks in retail establishments of cross contamination between strangers is again far higher than that of family members meeting where most people would even in normal circumstances be mixing with small groups of people.

The outcome of the review on the 19th June provisionally allows travel outside local areas from the 6th July this is much later than the governments of Northern Ireland and England have permitted.

A more recent anomaly is that UK citizens including those resident in Wales can holiday in a number of European destinations from 6th July but cannot book holidays in Wales until at least a week later.

The pandemic now appears to be receding and regulations are being relaxed, in the event of a second wave or similar event occurring, the Welsh Government should give consideration to a more balanced and evidence based approach to restricting peoples movements

Sean Murphy