

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/00273/20

Dr Dai Lloyd MS
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

5 August 2020

Dear Dai,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 July following the extended scrutiny session with the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.

This was a session on my entire portfolio that, as you know, overran and there were a significant number of areas to discuss. I have never sought to avoid scrutiny on shielding and I would have been happy to address the announcement by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales that day if shielding had been a topic of questioning. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales had of course already extended the shielding timescale before the committee met on 16 July and other UK nations had already publicly announced that they would pause shielding some time beforehand. England for example announced the pause to their shielding arrangements on 22 June. It is of course a matter for the committee to prioritise areas of questioning as you see fit.

In recognition of the number of our citizens affected by the advice to shield, and the key role of the third sector in supporting those individuals, my officials have held a number of stakeholder events in recent weeks. These sessions set out the future direction of shielding, explain how and why decisions are made and also take any questions and comments organisations may have about shielding or the support mechanisms which enable people to shield. Groups involved in these sessions have included the Disability Equality Forum, Learning Disability Third Sector Consortium and the Wales Cancer Alliance. The CMO and DCMO have also attended the Disability and Equality Forum on three occasions to discuss shielding.

Given the vital role of our Local Authorities (LAs) and County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) in supporting the shielding programme, a briefing session was held in advance of the announcement to ensure these organisations were prepared and had a chance to ask questions around the change to advice.

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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.

In preparation for the announcement, we provided resources to organisations across Wales, including a FAQ document, with links to all the relevant information on shielding. This helped organisations prepare for questions they were likely to receive after the announcement and provide appropriate support.

There is always more we could do and we will continue to respond to the feedback we receive which helps us shape our support for this cohort.

I hope this provides some reassurance to the Committee on our approach on this important area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

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