

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-05-1136
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/00157/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

1 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding a petition to allow Welsh residents to travel for fishing.

As highlighted by the First Minister on [19 December 2020](#), as of 20 December Wales moved to alert level four in our published Control Plan, the highest level of restrictions. Unfortunately, while we fully acknowledge the importance of exercise for our physical and mental well-being, our alert level 4 regulations state that we must all 'stay at home' unless for essential reasons. This means all indoor and outdoor attractions and facilities must close. Doing activities outdoors, while safer, is not risk free and still requires people to leave their homes when it is not essential. As it becomes colder, darker and wetter the conditions for the virus improve. The Welsh approach during 'stay at home' restrictions, based on expert behavioural advice, requires that people should be travelling as little as possible. Every exception to these rules or concession in one area weakens that message and could lead to misunderstandings amongst the population that place lives at risk. Science tells us that the longer we are away from our homes, and the further we travel, the more likely we are to either come into contact with the virus or transmit it. As a government we are taking every possible step to reduce the risks at this critical time, and to ensure we provide a strong and consistent message in order to keep Wales safe. The Welsh Government is unable to comment on any regulations made by the UK government.

The Welsh Government's approach to restrictions is based on the latest data and science relevant to Wales and on the latest advice from our own scientific and medical advisors, in order to reduce the speed of the transmission of the virus. Through these rules, we are trying to balance the importance of people's mental and physical well-being, and our economy, with the need to keep people safe and protect the NHS.

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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.

At the moment, the situation in Wales is very serious – the virus is present in all our local communities. Our NHS is under pressure. We need strong measures to bring the virus under control and to protect public health. We also need everyone to help, not just by following the rules but by making small changes to their daily routines and lives and reducing the contact they have with other people. This virus thrives on human contact – whenever we spend time with or near others there is a risk we will either catch or pass on coronavirus. We will minimise this risk, and reduce the pressure on our NHS, via the cumulative impact of all the changes we have made. It is the combined impact which makes the difference, not the risk posed by any one activity.

We are already seeing some positive signs from the lockdown, and with the vaccination rollout well underway we are hopeful of allowing people to resume activities such as angling once again - but only when the science and data tells us it is safe to do so.

We fully recognise the enormous efforts and sacrifices the Welsh public and businesses have made to keep Wales safe. The Welsh Government will continue to provide regular updates via its Covid19 Press Conferences over the coming days and weeks.

I hope this clarifies the current position regarding the regulations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Elis-Thomas'.

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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