

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Video Conference Via Zoom	Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 1 December 2020	Kayleigh Imperato – Deputy Clerk
Meeting time: 09.00	0300 200 6565373
	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 – 46)
- 2 New petitions
 - 2.1 P-05-1029 The Welsh Government should introduce mandatory testing of all passengers arriving at Cardiff Airport
(Pages 47 – 52)
 - 2.2 P-05-1041 A clear policy and funding for hospitals and care homes for virtual visiting during times of lockdown
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 - 2.3 P-05-1043 To have the manufacture and production of sufficient PPE for Wales located in Wales Post Covid-19
(Pages 64 – 72)
 - 2.4 P-05-1047 Let pubs and bars trade, cancel the curfew
(Pages 73 – 83)
 - 2.5 P-05-1048 Allow older people to access outdoor sports facilities for physical and mental wellbeing
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- 2.6 P-05-1051 Allow Welsh junior athletes to train with the same covid regulations as equivalent English juniors
(Pages 87 – 89)
- 2.7 P-05-1053 Keep gyms open and consider them as important as shops should another national lockdown take place
(Pages 90 – 93)
- 2.8 P-05-1063 Open golf courses as it plays an integral part to the improvement of both physical and mental health
(Pages 94 – 96)
- 2.9 P-05-1057 Increase the number of people allowed to attend wedding receptions
(Pages 97 – 104)
- 2.10 P-05-1058 Prevent a second national lockdown in Wales
(Pages 105 – 107)
- 2.11 P-05-1059 Classify Places of Worship as essential, to allow people to attend church during lockdowns
(Pages 108 – 116)
- 2.12 P-05-1061 Give financial support to Pet Boarding businesses
(Pages 117 – 130)
- 2.13 P-05-1066 Allow choristers and youth choirs to sing in Wales and young musicians to play in groups
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Other new petitions

- 2.14 P-05-1049 Change the school summer holiday break!
(Pages 134 – 140)

3 Updates to previous petitions

Health and Social Services

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

(Pages 141 – 150)

Education

- 3.2 P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

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

(Pages 161 – 164)

The following two petitions will be considered together

- 3.4 P-05-1011 Virtual On-line teacher-led lessons to be provided for all school children

(Page 165)

- 3.5 P-05-1015 Categorise schools as critical infrastructure

(Pages 166 – 170)

Culture, Sport and Tourism

- 3.6 P-05-1028 Relax the excessive restrictions to allow motor sport rallies to take place in Wales

(Pages 171 – 175)

Environment and Rural Affairs

- 3.7 P-05-937 STOP BOILING CRUSTACEANS ALIVE (lobsters, crabs, crayfish, prawns etc)

(Pages 176 – 180)

- 3.8 P-05-1026 Petition to ban the snaring of wildlife for use in the fur trade

(Pages 181 – 184)

Transport

3.9 P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)

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Housing and Local Government

3.10 P-05-1009 Mandate Welsh Councils to apply a minimum 100% Council Tax surcharge on second homes

(Pages 191 – 193)

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-1029 The Welsh Government should introduce mandatory testing of all passengers arriving at Cardiff Airport

This petition was submitted by Lawrence Evans having collected a total of 184 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Due to Coronavirus passengers are currently required to quarantine on arrival at Cardiff Airport from a list of European and International Countries.

This has led to a decline in passenger numbers utilizing the airport both outbound and inbound, a loss of revenue for airlines supporting our National airport, a loss of revenue for Cardiff Airport Ltd and a lack of confidence in the tourism industry due to passengers being required to quarantine on their return from identified countries.

Additional Information:

Cardiff airport is operated by an arms length company from Welsh Government, who have invested significantly in the airport and its facilities/staff.

If the current situation of mandatory quarantine is allowed to continue a catastrophic decline in passenger numbers will occur leading to significant financial losses for all parties concerned, the airport, the airlines & passengers who in many cases have to decide whether to forego their already paid for travel plans due to the restrictions of quarantine upon their return. Many countries throughout the World already, successfully operate two stage testing of passengers upon entry to their territory & a repeat five days later & this should be introduced to Cardiff airport to reassure the traveling public that their flight/holiday can proceed without further anxiety, concern & loss of monies paid. This will also return a degree of certainty to those airlines already invested in Cardiff airport & help retain their services for the future.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

P-05-1029 Introduce mandatory testing of all passengers arriving at Cardiff Airport

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14079-1

Petition Number: P-05-1029

Petition title: Introduce mandatory testing of all passengers arriving at Cardiff Airport

Text of petition: Due to Coronavirus passengers are currently required to quarantine on arrival at Cardiff Airport from a list of European and International Countries. This has led to a decline in passenger numbers utilising the airport both outbound and inbound, a loss of revenue for airlines supporting our National airport, a loss of revenue for Cardiff Airport Ltd and a lack of confidence in the tourism industry due to passengers being required to quarantine on their return from identified countries.

1. Background

There have been repeated calls in recent months for people arriving at UK airports to be tested for coronavirus. UK arrivals need to self-isolate in the place they are staying for the first 14 days after their arrival, unless they have only visited an exempt country, territory or region.



The [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) set out certain requirements for persons entering Wales to reduce the risk of imported infections. The guidance is applicable to anyone who arrives in Wales who has been outside of the Common Travel Area (UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) in the 14 days before arrival.

There is UK wide advice [safer air travel guidance for passengers](#) for those who live in Wales and have to travel overseas or for those visiting Wales.

Airport Testing

The [BBC reported](#) on 14 August 2020 that some countries, such as Iceland, offer travellers a choice on arrival if they have stayed in areas with high virus levels; anyone entering must either self-isolate for 14 days or get tested for coronavirus. In Germany, testing is compulsory at its airports for anyone arriving from a high-risk country.

The UK and Welsh Governments have been looking at introducing a 'test on arrival' policy but say there are logistical difficulties. There are also risks that testing will miss some cases of coronavirus.

The First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS told Members of the Senedd in [Plenary on Tuesday 15 September](#) that the Welsh Government is in discussions with Cardiff Airport to 'find a practical way' in which airport testing could be carried out. The First Minister said that the tests would not be mandatory, explaining that:

There are some practical issues that have to be addressed in that, in terms of the length of time that people may have to wait at an airport, how long people would be prepared to wait at an airport – you can't require people to do these things; it's a matter of voluntary participation. Therefore, you have to spend a bit of time to make sure that, if you are able to provide tests at an airport, you can do it in a way that is effective, and those discussions with the airport authorities here in Cardiff are continuing.

In [Plenary on 13 October 2020](#), the leader of the opposition Paul Davies MS questioned the First Minister on the progress that had been made in bringing in testing at the airport. The First Minister said discussions with managers at the airport were continuing; stating that the Welsh Government are "very close to agreeing it". He said;

When it is possible to have a system that does not lead to long, long delays, with people at the airport waiting for tests to be carried out—. He may think that that's easy to bring about. I can tell you, having read all of the information, that it's not. There are ways in which we can tackle that problem. We're very close to agreeing it. Once we do, we will make sure that people arriving in Cardiff Airport are able to be tested—and tested rapidly—so that where they are able to, they can resume their daily lives.

In October 2020, the UK Government's Transport Secretary Grant Shapps MP **announced** that a **Taskforce** was being established to look at a testing system for travellers to the UK. The taskforce has involved the devolved nations. **It is expected to report back to the Prime Minister in November 2020.**

In a speech to the Airport Operators Association on 9 November 2020, the UK Government's Transport Secretary Grant Shapps MP stated;

I want you to know that we've been making good progress on a 'test to release' programme to launch once we're out of lockdown. This will consist of a single test for arrivals into the UK, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger. Allowing a much reduced period of self-isolation.

Beyond the lockdown, this should encourage many more people to book flights with confidence knowing there is an option that allows them to shorten self-isolation.

We have been working extensively with health experts and the private testing sector on the practicalities of the new regime. For example, making sure that it doesn't impact on NHS capacity.

We will report to the Prime Minister very soon, with recommendations how we can support the recovery of international tourism and travel and increase consumer confidence.

In addition to this arrivals regime, we are working with partner countries to consider self-isolation and testing options that could be performed before departure.

I know it's been confusing for passengers trying to understand different testing regimes for each nation.

So we are leading international work to develop a framework for international travel to provide global consistency. An accepted international standard if you like.

The type of lateral flow tests currently being trialled in Liverpool also give hope for optimism. This is a highly accurate swab test that gives results in less than an hour, and doesn't need to go to a lab. Ultimately, it could open the way for non-quarantined air travel.

The primary solution to the aviation crisis is getting passengers flying safely again. Ultimately, through the development of an effective vaccine. But before that, through effective testing. And we will consider all options that can help aviation recover safely.

ertisement

The Welsh Government **has not yet responded** to the Committee's letter.

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.

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-1041 A clear policy and funding for hospitals and care homes for virtual visiting during times of lockdown

This petition was submitted by Kate Perry having collected a total of 187 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Sadly, were not alone being cut off from loved ones in hospital and care homes. My mum has alzheimers she isn't able to pick up a phone or use video chat to keep in touch. During the initial lockdown we didn't see what she looked like for 9 weeks, which was horrendous. Welsh Government guidelines are not clear enough and not all settings have the funds for equipment. This has to change. Everywhere should have a clear plan and ability to keep families in touch.

Additional Information:

Whilst I understand the safety needs around keeping vulnerable people safe from covid I don't understand the disregard for people's overall mental health. I know many people in the same situation with a loved one and not one hospital or care home are doing the same thing. Surely facilities and hospitals should have funding available and clear guidance on keeping families in touch as part of that person's holistic care. Welsh Government guidance states that people with learning disabilities or dementia should have visitors if not doing so would cause distress. You try proving that lack of contact is the cause of distress to someone who sometimes doesn't know who you are. Guidance states end of life is a reason for visits, but who decides at what point in that case you can visit? when the person isn't aware of you being there? It is not clear enough. Time is precious and we need clear guidance and funding so everywhere is following the same thing and families know there is hope in keeping in touch with their loved one.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

P-05-0141 A clear policy and funding for hospital and care homes for virtual visiting

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14409-2

Introduction

Petition number: [P-05-1041](#)

Petition title: A clear policy and funding for hospitals and care homes for virtual visiting

Text of petition: Sadly, were not alone being cut off from loved ones in hospital and care homes. My mum has alzheimers she isn't able to pick up a phone or use video chat to keep in touch. During the initial lockdown we didn't see what she looked like for 9 weeks, which was horrendous. Welsh Government guidelines are not clear enough and not all settings have the funds for equipment. This has to change. Everywhere should have a clear plan and ability to keep families in touch.

Whilst I understand the safety needs around keeping vulnerable people safe from covid I don't understand the disregard for people's overall mental health. I know many people in the same situation with a loved one and not one hospital or care home are doing the same thing. Surely facilities and hospitals should have funding available and clear guidance on keeping



families in touch as part of that person's holistic care. Welsh Government guidance states that people with learning disabilities or dementia should have visitors if not doing so would cause distress. You try proving that lack of contact is the cause of distress to someone who sometimes doesn't know who you are. Guidance states end of life is a reason for visits, but who decides at what point in that case you can visit? when the person isn't aware of you being there? It is not clear enough. Time is precious and we need clear guidance and funding so everywhere is following the same thing and families know there is hope in keeping in touch with their loved one.

Background

Care home visits

Many care homes took the decision to stop visitors entering the home in late February/early March to try to protect residents. The Welsh Government advised restricting visits from 23 March, but most did so earlier. Limited socially distanced visits have been permitted at certain points during the year.

In mid-June/July, some care homes began allowing outdoor visits to take place with restrictions, and at the end of August the [Welsh Government's guidance for care homes](#) was updated to allow for socially distanced indoor visits. However the guidance also said that if rates of coronavirus transmission rose in the community or at a national level, then visits may end .

This was the case in September when local lockdowns took place in some areas of Wales, followed by the national firebreak. Care home visits stopped again during these periods of restrictions (although end of life visits were permitted in certain circumstances). Visits were allowed to restart when the firebreak lifted on 9 November. The Welsh Government updated [its care home visiting guidance](#) on 10 November. However it says :

Visits to care homes may cease if local rates of transmission in the community exceed 5%. Visits to care homes may cease if rates of COVID-19 transmission rise at a national level. Restrictions on visits to care homes may be placed on homes within a certain area of the local authority, the entire local authority area or nationally depending on the rate of transmission.

Recently the Welsh Government says its working with partners across the UK on the development of new testing technologies, and hopes to have positive news soon about new rapid tests which could be available to care home visitors. The UK Government has just launched a [pilot for family members to get regular testing for safer care home visits](#) which allow physical contact.

Funding

On 14 April the [Welsh Government announced an extra £40m](#) to support adult social care services during the coronavirus pandemic. It has stated the funding was to help the sector with rising costs such as for PPE, but also for greater use of ICT to keep families in touch with their loved ones while they were not able to visit each other.

On [3 August the Welsh Government announced](#) a further £22.7m for local authorities to enable them to continue to assist adult social care providers with these on-going additional costs. This funding was available immediately through to the end of September, when the Welsh Government said it would review the situation again.

The [Welsh Government's Care Home Action Plan](#) includes an action 'to ensure care home residents are supported to maintain contact with their family. The [Welsh Government's update on progress on the plan](#) (published in October) states:

To support residents to connect with their loved ones in other ways we funded Digital Communities Wales (DWC) to purchase and distribute over a thousand digital devices to care homes across Wales

The Welsh Government says it will consider the effectiveness of the Digital Communities Wales project for care homes when the evaluation is completed (target date for this is December 2020).

The [Digital Communities Wales project website](#) says that thanks to additional funding from Welsh Government, it is loaning tablet devices to care homes, and delivering training to care home staff so that they can help their residents use the tablet devices.

The [Welsh Government has also just announced](#) (23 November) that temporary 'pods' are being provided to care homes to better facilitate visits over the winter.

The £3million pilot will cover the procurement, installation and lease of 100 units, with an initial 30 being installed and ready to use before Christmas. This also includes £1million for plans to support providers who prefer to make their own arrangements on a similar basis. The Welsh Government says:

Expanding capacity within care homes will help to better support risk-assessed visiting during the winter months as some care providers have found it difficult to support socially distanced visits due to a lack of internal visiting space.

Hospital visits

Hospital visits have been similarly restricted during the pandemic. The Welsh Government issued a written statement on 17 July which stated:

Face-to-face visiting needs to be agreed in advance and outdoor visits may be offered if appropriate. Virtual visiting should be encouraged and supported where possible. This guidance is being kept under review and will change as the pandemic status alters. The guidance can be found [here](#):

The Welsh Government [updated its detailed hospital visits guidance](#) on 6 October. It sets out the conditions in which visits are permitted and states:

We recognise the innovative ways our health boards and trusts have enabled patients to stay in touch with their families and friends.

Patients/service users can now connect with loved ones virtually via mobile phones and tablets in a safe way.

Virtual visiting should continue where possible. There is immense value in cards, phone calls, e-mails, social media as well as video calls.

NB: Specific funding for health boards to facilitate virtual visits is not mentioned.

Welsh Government response to the petition

The Minister for Health and Social Services said:

With regards to supporting people to stay in contact with their friends and families, I appreciate this continues to be an extremely difficult time for people living in care homes and their loved ones, who have faced

restrictions on visiting each other during the pandemic. Where visits in person are restricted we expect care home providers to make every effort to support people to stay in touch with their friends and family in other ways.

The Minister says the Welsh Government has supported care homes in this endeavour by providing additional funding to our Digital Communities Wales:

Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being (DCW) procured programme to purchase and distribute over 1000 digital devices (tablets) to care homes across Wales. Care Home staff were also provided with training and support to use them. I understand that some people, particularly those with dementia, may have difficulty holding a phone or using a tablet. We have commissioned an evaluation of this additional support provided by DCW which should highlight where reasonable adaptations could be made in this area, such as using a larger screen or headsets, for example.

The Minister goes on to say the Welsh Government is working with its sector stakeholder group and are keeping our approach to visits under review, and, “exploring how we can further support care home providers to enable visits safely”. The Minister also notes that ‘supporting the well-being of care home residents is a core theme in the Welsh Government’s Care Homes Action Plan.

In terms of funding, the Minister referred to the £40 million, and further £22.7 million made available to local authorities to enable them to assist care homes and others with the extra costs from the pandemic. He said these costs were predominantly in areas such as infection control and additional staffing, but funding could also be used to assist care homes in purchasing ICT to facilitate contact between residents and their families where visits were unable to take place.

He went on to say the additional £264 million recently announced for local authorities for Covid-19 related costs for the remainder of 2020-2021 includes funding for local authorities to assist adult social care providers for that period.

The Minister’s response does not mention hospital visits (other than referring to the title of the petition).



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07702/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

10 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 October concerning Petition P-05-1041- Funding for Hospitals and Care homes for virtual visiting in lockdown.

In relation to funding generally, as an immediate response to Covid-19 we made available to local authorities up to £40 million to enable them to assist adult social care providers with the additional day-to-day costs they were experiencing. This was made available to authorities through the local government hardship fund and was to assist care homes and others with the extra costs from the pandemic. These costs were predominantly in areas such as greater infection control and additional staffing, but funding could also be used to assist care homes in purchasing additional ICT to facilitate contact between residents and their families where visits to homes were unable to take place. This funding was originally for April and May, although we subsequently extended this period to include June. Since then we have provided local authorities with further funding of £22.7 million to continue to assist providers with these costs over a longer period until the end of September.

While this provided much needed support to the sector many providers still face financial pressures and will do for some time to come. As a result the additional £264 million we recently announced for local authorities for Covid-19 related costs for the remainder of 2020-2021 includes funding for local authorities to assist adult social care providers for that period. This further funding will enable local authorities to continue to assist care providers during the coming winter and beyond with their on-going additional costs in social care as a result of the pandemic.

With regards to supporting people to stay in contact with their friends and families, I appreciate this continues to be an extremely difficult time for people living in care homes and their loved ones, who have faced restrictions on visiting each other during the pandemic. Where visits in person are restricted we expect care home providers to make every effort to support people to stay in touch with their friends and family in other ways.

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.

I am aware of the thoughtful and creative ways that many care home staff have helped people feel connected during this time, such as through sharing photographs, cards, messages and newsletters. Some have been particularly pro-active by using social media and video calls to enable people and their families to engage in quizzes and other activities.

We have supported care homes in this endeavour by providing additional funding to our *Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being (DCW)* procured programme to purchase and distribute over 1000 digital devices (tablets) to care homes across Wales. Care Home staff were also provided with training and support to use them. I understand that some people, particularly those with dementia, may have difficulty holding a phone or using a tablet. We have commissioned an evaluation of this additional support provided by DCW which should highlight where reasonable adaptations could be made in this area, such as using a larger screen or headsets, for example.

We are continuing to work with our sector stakeholder group and are keeping our approach to visits under review. In particular we are exploring how we can further support care home providers to enable visits safely.

Supporting the well-being of care home residents is one of six core themes in our Care Homes Action Plan. As part of this plan we are working with our key partners to speak directly with people who live in care homes to ask them about their experience during the pandemic and what would support them over the winter. A Written Statement with an update on the Care Homes Action Plan was published on 7 October:

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-care-homes-action-plan-update>

Yours sincerely,



Vaughan Gething AS/MS

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

P-05-1041 A clear policy and funding for hospitals and care homes for virtual visiting during times of lockdown, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 20.11.20

Further to your letter I write with my response I wish to be considered as part of the petition committee discussion.

I feel the main issue surrounding this is the lack of clarity with any guidance provided by WAG.

There should be clear guidance specific to keeping people in care homes and hospitals in touch with their families not included as if an after thought with other guidance such as infection control.

This i feel is confirmed by the comment that extra funding provided was predominantly for infection control but could be used for purchasing digital equipment.

Were those receiving the funding made absolutely clear of this point? Is it fair to make them choose between using funding for infection control or other areas during a pandemic? particularly as they could be then criticised for such action if there are then infection control issues.

keeping families intouch should have its own guidance and funding to show it is held with the same importance to other areas of need.

There are sadly many distressing accounts of families who have not seen loved ones in any way for months and then they have sadly passed away, this is horrendous and I would question if human rights have been taken into account and also the severe impact on peoples mental health.

In our case we had no contact in any way or form for 9 weeks initially, as you can imagine knowing dementia is a progressive disease this was very distressing to then see the severe decline in mums presentation.

having the care home action plan is excellent, however again it is not clear robust guidance and statements such as " ensure residents well being" could be interpreted in different ways.

whilst the digital funding is excellent given that there are 23000 care home spaces in Wales around 1000 items is nowhere near enough to have a significant impact.

In mum and many other peoples cases with dementia they are placed in mental health hospital settings so all of the suggested funding would not be available to them either, I have had this clarified when enquiring regarding the digital funding.

There is no clear guidance that even mentions people in such circumstances and the WAG hospital visiting guidance is again unclear and open to interpretation, something we have personally experienced depending on what member of staff we speak to.

whilst the action plan is much appreciated families have been in these circumstances since March, the prioritisation of producing this doesn't appear to have been seen until many months later.

In many areas of the world the elderly are held in very high regard, people matter and should be treated with the dignity they deserve please let's show the world that Wales do the same. Time is precious and for many families like ours it is slipping away.

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-1043 To have the manufacture and production of sufficient PPE for Wales located in Wales Post Covid-19

This petition was submitted by Teresa Mary Carberry having collected a total of 127 signatures.

Text of Petition:

This current Corona Crisis has highlighted insufficient access to necessary PPE for all those who require it, in whichever health or social care setting they find themselves. As a nation we need to become self sufficient and not having to rely upon companies overseas etc. This would also necessitate an appraisal of storage, replenishment and distribution of said items and provide employment to many.

Mother to an ICU nurse, I live in daily fear for her safety. I will not be the only parent.

Additional Information:

Daily news briefings have highlighted the distressing lack of PPE to our essential workers in all settings, causing undue stress and in some instances inevitable infection and spread of the virus. A physical barrier between those having the virus and those caring for them is of importance and serves to protect front-line workers. It is the duty and responsibility of us all to ensure that this is possible. Making PPE in Wales for the use of all requiring it, whatever the level of need, guarantees availability, reduces the carbon footprint (no import flights etc) and provides the public with a sense of much needed security. In addition it would mean that many would find new employment – machinists, warehouse employees, quality control and those in logistics, to name but a few.

At present many people have risen to the challenge and are putting their sewing skills to good use. Admirable as this is – it would be so much better if they had not had to.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Delyn
- North Wales

Manufacture and Production of PPE

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14409-4

Petition Number: P-05-1043

Petition title: To have the manufacture and production of sufficient PPE for Wales located in Wales Post Covid-19.

Text of petition: This current Corona Crisis has highlighted insufficient access to necessary PPE for all those who require it, in whichever health or social care setting they find themselves. As a nation we need to become self sufficient and not having to rely upon companies overseas etc. This would also necessitate an appraisal of storage, replenishment and distribution of said items and provide employment to many.

Mother to an ICU nurse, I live in daily fear for her safety. I will not be the only parent.



1. Background

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is designed to help protect an individual against health or safety risks at work and prevent the spread of infection. In health and social care settings, PPE includes a wide range of items, including protection for eyes and face, gloves, aprons and gowns, and respiratory protective equipment, such as masks or face shields. Different types of PPE are used according to the level of risk, the setting or the procedure being carried out.

In Wales, the distribution of PPE is co-ordinated by the [NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership](#), (NWSSP) working with the Joint Equipment Stores that service local authorities.

In mid-March 2020, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee agreed to undertake an [inquiry](#) into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales. In July 2020, the Committee published its first [report](#) which focused on a number of key areas, one of which being PPE.

Section 3 of the report discusses PPE and provides information on the supply and availability of PPE during the first wave of the pandemic and also the procurement and manufacturing of PPE.

During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was widely reported concern in the UK and worldwide regarding securing adequate and continuous supplies of PPE.

In May 2020 the Welsh Government stated in [guidance](#) on its website that it was working closely with businesses and industry to get supplies of critical equipment including cleaning products and PPE to front line workers facing shortages during the Covid-19 outbreak. Those who were existing suppliers of PPE or critical equipment or were able to provide any additional support on either manufacturing, repurposing products or innovation, were asked to [contact the Life Sciences Hub](#).

2. Welsh Government action

In correspondence to the Committee dated 4 November 2020, the Minister for Health and Social Services states that in order to maintain a secure position over the winter period, NWSSP has developed a strategic plan for PPE procurement to March 2021.

The vast majority of PPE issued to the health and care sectors in Wales has been directly sourced by NWSSP, through both national and international procurement routes. The winter procurement plan assumes self-sufficiency in sourcing PPE for Wales, rather than depending on UK-Government supply, however, the Minister notes that the Welsh Government continues to work with the other UK nations, identifying opportunities to combine procurement efforts to bring in vital new stocks and to secure better-value PPE purchases. A UK-wide PPE procurement protocol has been developed to support this.

The Minister highlights that domestic PPE production is an important lever for the foundation economy in Wales and the Welsh Government is working with its partners in industry to supplement the production of PPE supplies through innovation and new manufacturing routes. The Minister goes on to say that the very positive response to the First Minister's call on Welsh industry to help produce extra supplies of PPE for the NHS and social care at the onset of the pandemic resulted in face masks, face coverings, visors, scrubs aprons and hand sanitiser being produced locally.

Welsh businesses are seen by the Minister to have an important role to play in strengthening the Welsh Government's resilience to further peaks of Covid-19 and any implications of a no-deal Brexit. The Welsh Government's aim is to increase the amount of PPE manufactured in Wales and its PPE procurement plan blends local manufacture with international supply.

A number of Welsh manufacturers are already producing face masks which meet the safety requirements for medical-grade PPE, with others producing both disposable and reusable face-coverings for use by the wider public. This is in addition to local production channels for aprons, scrubs and gowns which have been developed since the start of the pandemic with support from both Industry Wales and the Welsh Government.

The Minister notes that [Industry Wales](#) and its partners will be integral to informing the Welsh Government's future engagement with businesses regarding future PPE requirements as well as exploring the potential to on-shore more of the other procurement requirements in Wales.

3. Welsh Parliament action

As mentioned above, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published a [report](#) in July 2020 on the findings of its inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales.

Recommendation 1 in the report relates to securing, stockpiling and distributing PPE, and recommendation 2 states:

Recommendation 2. The Welsh Government must review its own systems to ensure the mechanisms are in place to enable manufacturers in Wales to respond quickly in supplying appropriate PPE in the event of any future outbreaks. This must include having procurement arrangements that are able to respond in a timely manner.

The response from the Welsh Government to this recommendation provides similar information to that provided in the Minister's correspondence to the Committee on 4 November 2020 and mentioned above.

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/07701/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

4 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October on behalf of the petition committee regarding the manufacturing and production of PPE locally within Wales.

We have a stable supply of PPE to meet the needs of our health and social care workforce. Since early March, we have distributed over 398 million items of PPE to health and social care in Wales. Over 196 million of these items have been issued for use in social care settings. We have over 252 million items remaining in stock with orders placed for more than 322 million further items.

Given the relative strength of the NHS Wales stock and supply position, we have been able to support the other UK nations by issuing over 14 million items of PPE through mutual aid since the onset of the pandemic.

In order to maintain a secure position over the winter period, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) have developed a strategic plan for PPE procurement to March 2021. As set out in this plan, a stockpile of critical products will be held to ensure resilience and self-sufficiency of supply for the health and social care sectors in Wales throughout the winter and to March 2021 and the PPE stockpile will be increased to 24 weeks supply by the end of November 2020.

In support of the Welsh Government's commitment to continue to provide social care settings with appropriate PPE for the duration of the pandemic, NWSSP will continue to source and distribute PPE to local authorities to meet the needs of the social care sector for the remainder of this financial year. A Service Level Agreement has been agreed between NWSSP and the WLGA to formalise current PPE provision to the social care sector to March 2021.

As well as to the NHS and social care, PPE has also been issued to GPs, optometrists, urgent dental centres and pharmacies.

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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.

A standard service specification has been agreed for all primary care contractor services with a plan to extend the standard PPE packs currently supplied by NWSSP to dental and optometry contractors to bespoke packs over the coming months.

The vast majority of PPE issued to the health and care sectors in Wales has been directly sourced by NWSSP, through both national and international procurement routes. The winter Procurement Plan assumes self-sufficiency in sourcing PPE for Wales, rather than depending on UK-Government supply, however, we continue to work with the other UK nations, identifying opportunities to combine our procurement efforts to bring in vital new stocks and to secure better-value PPE purchases. A UK-wide PPE procurement protocol has been developed to support this.

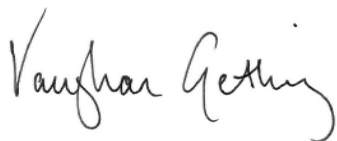
Domestic PPE production is an important lever for the foundation economy in Wales and we are working with our partners in industry to supplement the production of PPE supplies through innovation and new manufacturing routes. The very positive response to the First Minister's call on Welsh industry to help produce extra supplies of PPE for the NHS and social care at the onset of the pandemic resulted in face masks, face coverings, visors, scrubs aprons and hand sanitiser being produced locally.

Welsh businesses have an important role to play in strengthening our resilience to further peaks of COVID-19 and the risks posed by a no-deal Brexit. The pandemic has highlighted the fragility of the global supply chain and our aim is to increase the amount of PPE manufactured in Wales. Our PPE procurement plan blends local manufacture with international supply. A number of Welsh manufacturers are already producing face masks which meet the very high safety requirements for medical-grade PPE, with others producing both disposable and reusable face-coverings for use by the wider public. This is in addition to local production channels for aprons, scrubs and gowns which have been developed since the start of the pandemic with support from both Industry Wales and the Welsh Government.

Industry Wales and their partners will be integral to informing our future engagement with business regarding future PPE requirements as well as exploring the potential to on-shore more of our other procurement requirements.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

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

P-05-1043 To have the manufacture and production of sufficient PPE for Wales located in Wales Post Covid-19, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.11.20

To the Petitions Committee

Thank you all for the time you have allocated to both process and read my petition to date. At the time of writing it, I was more than a little concerned by the apparent lack of sufficient PPE for frontline medical staff, such as my daughter. The reply to the Chair of your Committee, from Vaughan Gething has done much to alleviate my concern and anxiety. It clearly indicates that the situation with regard to PPE in Wales, is being well managed and is readily available to those who need it, in order to complete their work in safety.

I hope that this situation continues and that as a Nation Wales will always have sufficient PPE for its needs and be self sustainable.

Kind regards,

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-1047 Let pubs and bars trade, cancel the curfew

This petition was submitted by Adam Smith having collected a total of 750 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Licensees of bars and pubs follow strict procedures in order to trade and to ensure that staff and patrons are kept safe at all times.

With added socially distancing measures in place, licensees across the country have shown they were able to do this and still trade, keep their venues open and securing jobs.

Additional Information:

The Sage documents show that experts dismissed the idea of a 10pm curfew for pubs, bars and restaurants before it was implemented across England.

www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-3-tier-lockdown-new-restrictions-boris-johnson-sage-curfew-b1012869.html%3Famp

The First Minister himself states there is no prove to link rise in cases to bars, pubs and restaurants.

"Evidence in the Gwent Police force area shows that the rising number of cases are not being caused by pubs and restaurants, First Minister Mark Drakeford has claimed."

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink-news/newport-lockdown-gwent-pubs-hospitality-19078374>

Venues are reporting upto a 93% downfall since August compared to previous year.

With very little support available and uncertainty, this is causing more worry and stress on owners within hospitality.

We are calling on the Welsh Government to cancel the 10pm curfew, let venues trade in accordance to their licence and save our night time economy.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport East
- South Wales East

P-05-1047 Let pubs and bars trade, cancel the curfew.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14570-2

Petition Number: P-05-1047

Petition title: Let pubs and bars trade, cancel the curfew

Text of petition:

Licensees of bars and pubs follow strict procedures in order to trade and to ensure that staff and patrons are kept safe at all times.

With added socially distancing measures in place, licensees across the country have shown they were able to do this and still trade, keep their venues open and securing jobs.

The Sage documents show that experts dismissed the idea of a 10pm curfew for pubs, bars and restaurants before it was implemented across England.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-3-tier-lockdown-new-restrictions-boris-johnson-sage-curfew-b1012869.html%3Famp>



The First Minister himself states there is no prove to link rise in cases to bars, pubs and restaurants. "Evidence in the Gwent Police force area shows that the rising number of cases are not being caused by pubs and restaurants, First Minister Mark Drakeford has claimed."

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink-news/newport-lockdown-gwent-pubs-hospitality-19078374>

Venues are reporting up to a 93% downfall since August compared to previous year. With very little support available and uncertainty, this is causing more worry and stress on owners within hospitality.

We are calling on the Welsh Government to cancel the 10pm curfew, let venues trade in accordance to their licence and save our night time economy.

1. Background

On 22 September 2020, the Welsh Government announced that hospitality businesses in Wales would be required to close from 10pm in order to help tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The 10pm curfew, which came into force on the 24 September, was also introduced in England and Scotland at the same time.

The Welsh Government clarified that the 10pm curfew applies to the sale of alcohol, with premises having to close by 10:20pm in Wales, allowing customers time to finish any food/ beverages. This is slightly different to the position in England where premises must close at 10pm.

During the firebreak lockdown, hospitality businesses such as pubs and bars were required to close from 23 October to 9 November, with the exception of takeaway and delivery services.

Following the firebreak lockdown, since 9 November hospitality businesses have been able to reopen. Again, they have been required to stop selling alcohol at 10pm, and all places licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises will need to close by 10.20pm. The Welsh Government also introduced a limit on the

size of groups, which must be limited to 4 people (not including children aged under 11) unless they are from the same household. There are also requirements such as pre-booking, table service only, and controlled entry to premises.

Advisory bodies

The petitioners refer to documents published by the UK Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

Whilst SAGE is responsible for ensuring "timely and coordinated scientific advice is made available to decision makers to support UK cross-government decisions", the Welsh Government also has its own body - the Technical Advisory Cell (TAC). Both co-chairs of TAC are members of SAGE. The Research Service has produced a blog article which includes more information about each body.

Advice relating to curfews

At its 21 September meeting, SAGE considered and endorsed a paper on 'the effectiveness and harms of different non-pharmaceutical interventions' (PDF,232KB). The UK Government website makes clear that the paper "is the assessment of the evidence at the time of writing".

The paper considers the impact of a range of non-pharmaceutical interventions [NPIs] on the transmission of Covid-19, on other social and economic factors and considers any implementation issues relating to the intervention. One intervention included in the paper is the closure of bars and pubs. In considering the impact on Covid-19 transmission, the paper states that "curfews [are] likely to have a marginal impact".

TAC regularly publishes summaries of the advice it provides to the Welsh Government. Whilst it does not mention curfews specifically, the summary of advice provided on 18 September states:

A package of [NPIs] on local and national scale may be needed...Interventions differ in their effectiveness in reducing transmission and have different types and levels of harm associated with them. It is increasingly important to consider the indirect harms associated with COVID-19.

The Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which includes technical and scientific experts from across the Welsh Government, NHS Wales

and academia, published its advice to Ministers on a firebreak lockdown on 19 October. This states that:

Outside the household, preliminary analysis of a recent case-control study by PHE [Public Health England] suggests that working in health and social care remains a risk factor, as is working in close personal services and hospitality. Activities associated with increased risk amongst cases include frequenting entertainment venues e.g. bars and restaurants. Outbreaks associated with restaurants and bars have also been recorded, both in the UK and elsewhere.

When reviewing the post-firebreak proposals on 3 November, the Chief Medical Officer stated that, in relation to the requirements for the hospitality industry:

...,although providing some prospect of economic activity returning, re-opening the Welsh hospitality industry will inevitably lead to some increase in viral transmission. The option of allowing only 4 individuals to interact in these settings together with the other requirements that are being placed on the sector will help to mitigate this as will enabling social mixing to take place in regulated settings.

Reaction

In response to the curfew announcement, the British Beer and Pubs Association (BBPA) issued a statement that it would “devastate” the pub sector without additional financial support from the Government.

Giving evidence to the House of Commons Treasury Committee (PDF,312KB), the CEO of UKHospitality highlighted that whilst:

...other European countries...have introduced a curfew [on alcohol sales]...it has been a later curfew: it has been 11 o'clock with a 12 o'clock closure or midnight with a 1 o'clock closure.

The difference in approach between England and Wales was also highlighted during the evidence session. As outlined earlier, in Wales alcohol sales must stop at 10pm but venues can remain open for slightly longer. In England, venues must shut at 10pm, and there have been news reports of large numbers of people gathering on the streets instead.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 30 October 2020, the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism states that:

The hospitality measures – including the 10pm alcohol curfew and 10.20pm closure of licensed premises – were developed in line with public health advice and after consulting the hospitality industry (including the British Beer & Pub Association)

The Deputy Minister also refers to the advice the Welsh Government receives from TAC, outlined earlier in this briefing. The Deputy Minister says that TAC “evidence supports the view that alcohol consumption still presents a major risk factor in the spread of infectious diseases” and the 10pm ban on alcohol sales has been introduced to minimise these risks.

The letter also refers to people not adhering to social distancing measures and whilst:

...this is not necessarily as a result of hospitality businesses not putting suitable measures in place [it] is more about people’s behaviour and interactions in and around these settings.

It also suggests that “since the introduction of time limited opening hours, there is evidence of a reduction in the number of contacts identified by individuals who have tested positive”.

During a Welsh Government coronavirus briefing on 9 November, the First Minister did not comment specifically on whether the 10pm curfew had been effective.

The Deputy Minister’s letter also outlines the support made available to businesses. The Research Service has produced a blog article outlining the various UK and Welsh Government business support schemes which is regularly updated.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On 7 October 2020, the Senedd’s Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee heard evidence from sectors of the economy that have been severely affected by the pandemic. UKHospitality Cymru stated that:

...one of the first things that could be done is a review of the 10 o'clock provision that's across all licensed premises at the moment. We feel it's an arbitrary deadline, but also what we're getting reports of, and it's not only anecdotal evidence but also from our discussions with Government, is that people are doing gatherings that are not under the licensing guidance and not under our professionalism, if you like, in looking after people when they're enjoying hospitality. It would make much more sense to give an extended time when they're in safe environments that are being properly looked after by professionals, rather than leaving them to their own devices to try to find other places.

On 5 November 2020, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee heard evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on live music. The Committee heard from the Chief Executive of Cardiff nightclub Clwb Ifor Bach that whilst it was able to reopen as a pub during August:

...once the 10 o'clock curfew came in, it was financially unsustainable for us to remain open because 70 per cent of our income came in after 10.

During the session, witnesses also told the Committee their views that it was safer for people to continue drinking alcohol past 10pm in licensed premises, where track and trace and social distancing measures were in place, than to continue drinking in people's homes.

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-05-1047
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/02930/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Member of the Senedd
Chair – Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Economy, Transport & North Wales on behalf of the Petitions Committee. I note the enclosure of a Petition from Adam Smith regarding the 10pm curfew on alcohol sales in licensed premises in Wales. I am replying as I lead on hospitality issues.

The hospitality measures – including the 10pm alcohol curfew and 10.20pm closure of licensed premises – were developed in line with public health advice and after consulting the hospitality industry (including the British Beer & Pub Association). The measures are based on the social and physical distancing measures we should all be taking, which are there to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus.

The Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) provides coordination of scientific and technical advice to support Welsh Government decision makers during emergencies such as the current Coronavirus pandemic and ensure Welsh Government and Public Health Wales have timely access to the most up-to-date scientific and technical information related to the outbreak, which is published weekly here: <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell-summary-advice-16-october-2020>.

We recognise the efforts the majority of hospitality businesses across Wales have implemented to operate safe environments for their customers, however TAC evidence supports the view that alcohol consumption still presents a major risk factor in the spread of infectious diseases. The effect of drinking alcohol – particularly drinking too much alcohol – can make people engage in more risk-taking behaviours. It can also make it harder for people to recall where they have been and who they were in close contact with if they are

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asked by contact tracing teams in the event someone tests positive. This is supported by concerns from local authorities and the police over a breakdown in social distancing by groups of people following extended periods of alcohol consumption and from groups of people visiting multiple premises. The 10pm (22.20) ban on alcohol sales has been introduced to minimise these risks.

When people disregard social distancing the risk of COVID-19 infection rates rise. This is not necessarily as a result of hospitality businesses not putting suitable measures in place but is more about people's behaviour and interactions in and around these settings. Whilst one particular setting cannot be singled out, measures need to be taken in settings where social interactions typically last for 15 minutes or more. Since the introduction of time limited opening hours, there is evidence of a reduction in the number of contacts identified by individuals who have tested positive. We will continue to gather evidence on the potential role that hospitality settings play in the spread of Covid-19.

I am acutely aware of the immense challenges the hospitality sector is facing as a result of the measures taken to protect public health and save lives. Whilst we know the majority of hospitality businesses are working hard to comply, cases and clusters have been linked to hospitality settings and local authorities have taken enforcement action against pubs and restaurants where they have identified breaches of regulations – this includes, in some cases, closure notices. We are committed to doing everything we can to support the sector through this incredibly difficult period and thank them for the way they have responded to date. To this end, we are working with stakeholders to explore new and innovative funding solutions that will help the Tourism and Hospitality sector move forwards. Whilst the unprecedented national schemes delivered through the UK Government have provided essential aid during this period the ability of Welsh Government to offer additional financial support has allowed Welsh businesses to benefit at a far higher level when compared to other regions of the UK.

The number of businesses benefitting from government support, which includes both UK and Welsh Government schemes, was 14% in England and 34% in Wales. Meanwhile an additional £60m will be allocated to support businesses impacted by local lockdown restrictions. The [Eligibility Checker](#) for companies to find out if they can access funding from the third phase of the ERF is now open and the Fund will go live on 26th October.

For businesses affected by the firebreak, a new £300m fund, will open next week (week commencing 26th October) to support them. Every business covered by the small business rates relief will receive a £1,000 payment. Small and medium-sized retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, which have to close, will receive a one-off payment of up to £5,000. There will also be additional discretionary grants and support for smaller businesses, which are struggling.

The £80m fund announced last week to help businesses develop in the longer term, will be increased to £100m, which includes £20m ring-fenced for tourism and hospitality. Businesses will also be able to access the support available through the existing Job Retention Scheme or the new expanded Job Support Scheme.

As you will be aware, a short, sharp, **firebreak** was introduced across Wales from **6pm, Friday 23rd October**, until the start of **Monday 9th November 2020**, to help regain control of coronavirus. During this time, certain businesses and venues, including bars, restaurants and most shops must close. See FAQ guidance at: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-circuit-break-frequently-asked-questions#section-53253>

Following the end of the firebreak, a new set of national rules will be introduced, covering how people can meet and how the public sector and businesses operate, including the hospitality and venues sector.

My officials continue to engage with the sector through the hospitality stakeholder group and we are endeavouring to do all that we can to support the sector and keep everyone safe.

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-1048 Allow older people to access outdoor sports facilities for physical and mental wellbeing

This petition was submitted by Colin Edmunds having collected a total of 1,743 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Older members of society have often lost their partner and have established a circle of friends in their own particular club. This is particularly pertinent in golf clubs. The club maybe outside their lockdown area, sometimes by even a short distance. This year has been difficult for all but particularly so for this age group, with not only their physical health suffering but also having a severe effect on their mental health.

Additional Information:

The Equality Act 2010 says you musn't be discriminated against because of your age. Discrimination, which is against the Equality Act, is unlawful.

Recent changes by the Welsh Government allows younger people to travel out of their lockdown area to their personal sporting club.

This action discriminates against older people also needing the same facilities.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West



Ein cyf/Our ref DET/02851/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

16 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Petition P-05-1048 ahead of the Petition Committee's formal consideration.

The Welsh Government's approach to tackling the Covid-19 pandemic has been, and will continue to be, cautious and based on the latest advice from SAGE and the World Health Organisation.

The local lockdowns and fortnight-long national firebreak lockdown were introduced to save lives and prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed. Cases of coronavirus have been rising sharply in Wales as we head into winter. While the national and local measures put in place across Wales have helped to keep that spread under check, there was a growing consensus that additional action was needed. Considerations have had to be made around the cumulative impact of all the actions we might make. It is the combined impact of numerous activities which makes the difference, not the risk posed by any one activity.

This requires a national effort, which means compromises and commitment from us all. Services which were essential to protect the health of the public during the period of the short lockdown have remained open. Sport and leisure facilities were not considered to be essential at this stage, as it was still possible to exercise in public spaces outdoors during the short firebreak.

While we appreciate the impact these short-term restrictions have on the most vulnerable in our society, the cautious approach we have taken in introducing these measures is aimed at protecting those most at risk from the virus, including elderly people. We also have strong scientific evidence that the risks are lower for children, which has allowed us some flexibility in keeping some organised children's activities running.

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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.

Following the end of the national firebreak a new set of national rules has been introduced, covering how people can meet and how the public sector and businesses operate. Further details of the new rules following the firebreak have recently been published on the Welsh Government's website and can be accessed via the link below.

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-1051 Allow Welsh junior athletes to train with the same covid regulations as equivalent English juniors

This petition was submitted by Andrew Brown having collected a total of 219 signatures.

Text of Petition:

My sons will be playing basketball in this years English national league which starts in November.

English junior athletes are already playing practice matches in training but Welsh children can't even share a ball in training.

This puts Welsh junior athletes at a huge disadvantage compared to England's.

This is happening in all junior sports clubs inc netball, rugby and volleyball.

Welsh Government must align our regulations with juniors of England to make it equal for the children.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central



Ein cyf/Our ref DET/02849/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

16 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Petition P-05-1051 ahead of the Petition Committee's formal consideration.

The Welsh Government's approach to tackling the Covid-19 pandemic has been, and will continue to be, cautious and based on the latest advice from SAGE and the World Health Organisation.

To allow for the safe return of sport and physical activity, Sport Wales and the Welsh Sports Association established a number of planning groups at our instigation. The groups, with representatives from the breadth of sporting activity including Basketball Wales, 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 review of the regulations. The groups have played a key role in developing guidance for a phased return to sport. National Governing Bodies, including Basketball Wales, have also produced clear guidance on the steps needed for their individual sports to resume.

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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.

Regulations currently in force in Wales do allow organised activities to continue. This encompasses a broad range of activities run by a business, a public body or charitable institution, a club, or the national governing body of a sport or other activity. This could include a range of sports, music and recreational activities for young people. It also includes and activities provided outside of school hours and during school holidays, such as after school clubs or classes. These are not part of a child's formal education, though they have wider benefits for the child's development and wellbeing.

Following the end of the national firebreak a new set of national rules has been introduced, covering how people can meet and how the public sector and businesses operate. Further details of the new rules following the firebreak have recently been published on the Welsh Government's website and can be accessed via the link below.

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 2.7

P-05-1053 Keep gyms open and consider them as important as shops should another national lockdown take place

This petition was submitted by Michelle Adams having collected a total of 20,616 signatures.

Text of Petition:

If the Welsh Government has to make another national lockdown, gyms should be considered as important as shops in order to protect the nation's health. They are a much less risk to Covid transmission than restaurants and pubs.

Additional Information:

<https://www.ukactive.com/news/fitness-and-leisure-sector-reports-covid-rate-of-0-34-per-100000-visits-since-reopening-in-england/>

- 22,000,000 (22 million) gym visits resulted in a mere 78 Covid cases
- Uk gyms showing just 0.35 cases per 100,000 visits

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-54464470>

Gyms are still only showing 1.7% percent of cases, but they want to close us and keep restaurants open which have a higher rate of 9.6% cases

Male suicide is now at an all time high

<https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3431>

Data published by the Office for National Statistics showed that in 2019 the suicide rate among men and boys was 16.9 deaths per 100 000, the highest since 2000 and slightly above the 2018 rate of 16.2 per 100 000. The suicide rate among women and girls was 5.3 deaths per 100 000 in 2019, up from 5.0 per 100 000 in 2018 and the highest since 2004.

<https://academic.oup.com/qjmed/article/113/10/707/5857612> which discusses suicide, mental health and Covid.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ynys Môn
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1053
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/02863/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet,

16 November 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Petition P-05-1053 ahead of the Petition Committee's formal consideration.

The Welsh Government's approach to tackling the Covid-19 pandemic has been, and will continue to be, cautious and based on the latest advice from SAGE and the World Health Organisation.

The local lockdowns and fortnight-long national firebreak lockdown were introduced to save lives and prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed. Cases of coronavirus have been rising sharply in Wales as we head into winter. While the national and local measures put in place across Wales have helped to keep that spread under check, there was a growing consensus that additional action was needed. Considerations have had to be made around the cumulative impact of all the actions we might make. It is the combined impact of numerous activities which makes the difference, not the risk posed by any one activity.

This requires a national effort, which means compromises and commitment from us all. Services which were essential to protect the health of the public during the period of the short lockdown have remained open. Sport and leisure facilities were not considered to be essential at this stage, as it was still possible to exercise outdoors during the short firebreak.

There are no current plans for further firebreaks. Should the need arise however, our approach when considering steps needed to control the spread of the virus would be determined by the circumstances at the time.

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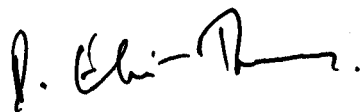
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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The First Minister recently set out the new national measures following the national firebreak, and confirmed that gyms and leisure facilities may re-open from 09 November 2020. Further information is available in the link below.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-new-national-covid-measures-wales>

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

P-05-1053 Keep gyms open and consider them as important as shops should another national lockdown take place, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 24.11.20

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government's response to my petition.

As is evident from the large number of signatures the petition has received, the issue of gyms being allowed to remain open in case of a further extended lockdown, or even another short 'fire-break' lockdown, is important to a large number of people across Wales. From gym owners and personal trainers, to athletes and people like me, who rely on access to fitness classes in order to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, this petition demonstrates how vital keeping these facilities open is.

I would hope that the Welsh Government would have easy access to far more statistics than I, to show that the risk of transmission of Covid19 is far lower in gyms than at first feared, and in fact, is much lower than many other business types, that were permitted to re-open earlier following the national lockdown at the beginning of the year. While naming gyms specifically as being allowed to reopen on November 9th was a positive sign that the Welsh Government was acknowledging the lower risk of these environments, what I (and many others) would like to see is that a real, concerted effort will be made to class gyms as essential and keep them open should any further lockdowns be needed, especially should they be able to prove that they can reach certain safety criteria that would allow this, for example, ventilation and adequate space to maintain social distancing.

Following the update to the English tier system yesterday, with gyms being removed from the list of businesses having to close, at all tier levels, I hope that the Welsh Government will consider this a sign that the UK parliament also agree that the benefits to the physical and mental well-being of gym users outweighs the low risk of possible Covid transmission in well maintained, Covid secure facilities.

I also wish to take the opportunity to say that we have the support of many AM's across Wales, including Rhun ap Iwan, who represents Anglesey (where I live). I hope this petition will also receive the support of the Petitions Committee and that the Welsh Government will soon be making a positive announcement on this matter.

Kind and hopeful regards,

Agenda Item 2.8

P-05-1063 Open golf courses as it plays an integral part to the improvement of both physical and mental health

This petition was submitted by Sam Evans having collected a total of 6,317 signatures.

Text of Petition:

It's a known fact that both golf and physical activity for that matter improves physical and mental health! Golf is one of the few sports in which you can participate and still be safe by social distancing, and with the current focus on mental health at the moment I think taking away the only form of exercise some people get was not a wise decision.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East



Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03021/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

16 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence, regarding petition P-05-1063 to open golf courses during the firebreak.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your query.

As you'll be aware the fortnight-long action was needed to save lives and prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed. Cases of coronavirus have been rising sharply in Wales as the virus has woken up for winter. While the national and local measures put in place across Wales have helped to keep that spread under check, there was a growing consensus that additional action is now needed, with a strong 'stay home message'. Considerations have had to be made around the cumulative impact of all the actions we might make. It is the combined impact of numerous activities which makes the difference, not the risk posed by any one activity.

Following the end of the October firebreak, as of the 9th November a new set of regulations came in for Wales, and many of the frequently asked questions and answers relating to these regulations can be found [here](#). On 2 November the First Minister set out the new national measures that came into effect following the fire-break and confirmed that golf courses and leisure facilities in Wales would be able to re-open from 9 November, and that organised activities for groups of up to 15 indoors and up to 30 outdoors will be allowed across Wales.

I would be grateful if you could please inform your constituent that we fully recognise the enormous efforts and sacrifices the Welsh public and businesses have made to keep Wales safe and to save lives, and are most grateful. The Welsh Government will continue to provide regular updates via the Covid19 press conferences and our social media channels over the coming weeks.

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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.

I hope this clarifies the current position.

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 2.9

P-05-1057 Increase the number of people allowed to attend wedding receptions

This petition was submitted by Simon Clark having collected a total of 984 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We have a wedding planned for the end of October, but currently cannot have a reception following with all of our guests. We could have a meal in a restaurant but not a 'reception'.

Additional Information:

Northern Ireland currently allows venues to limit the numbers based on the size of the venue and safe social distancing. We would like to see this introduced in Wales. Giving parity between the restaurant/bar industry and the wedding industry.

The current regulations and lack of timeline moving forward have left hundreds of couples in limbo and under a huge amount of stress, during what should be the happiest time of their lives.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Increase the number of people allowed to attend wedding receptions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 01 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 01 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14570-6

Petition Number: P-05-1057

Petition title: Increase the number of people allowed to attend wedding receptions.

Text of petition: We have a wedding planned for the end of October, but currently cannot have a reception following with all of our guests. We could have a meal in a restaurant but not a 'reception'.

Northern Ireland currently allows venues to limit the numbers based on the size of the venue and safe social distancing. We would like to see this introduced in Wales. Giving parity between the restaurant/bar industry and the wedding industry.

The current regulations and lack of timeline moving forward have left hundreds of couples in limbo and under a huge amount of stress, during what should be the happiest time of their lives.



1. Background

On the 23 March 2020, in order to halt the spread of coronavirus, restrictions on gatherings and the movement of people, along with the closure of non-essential businesses were introduced. Among the premises required to close were places of worship, registry offices, wedding venues and hospitality businesses. As a result, wedding and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions were postponed or cancelled.

In early June 2020, the First Minister announced some of the first easing of restrictions in Wales, but this did not extend to weddings and civil partnership ceremonies. The only exception to the restriction was in circumstances where one of the couple had a terminal illness.

As the number of infections decreased over time, further gradual easing of restrictions were announced. In mid-June 2020, places of worship and registry offices were allowed to conduct ceremonies once again, as reported in this BBC Wales news article. However, this did not extend to wedding and civil partnership receptions. Further amendments to the regulations were made on 21 August (now revoked), which did allow up to 30 people to attend a reception to celebrate the solemnisation of a marriage or civil partnership in a regulated premises. The limit of 30 at the time applied to receptions held indoors or outdoors.

During September and October 2020, a number of 'local lockdowns' were enforced in areas of Wales. The regulations placed specific restrictions on the movement and gathering of people, although it was still considered a reasonable excuse to travel in or out of a **local health protection area** to attend the **solemnization** of a marriage or civil partnership. Receptions were also allowed at the time, but **all guest** at a wedding reception had to be resident within the health protection area.

On 19 October 2020, the First Minister announced that Wales would enter a two-week fire-break lockdown. The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 3) (Wales) Regulations 2020 (now revoked) placed new restrictions on the movement and gathering of people. Attending the solemnization of a marriage or formation of a civil partnership was allowed during the fire-break lockdown, but receptions or celebrations following the ceremony were prohibited.

A new set of national rules and guidance were introduced on 9 November 2020.

2. Welsh Government action

The rules on holding wedding receptions

Part 2 of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 4\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) (as amended) imposes limits on meeting other people (referred to as “participating in gatherings”) and on events.

Regulation 4 limits gatherings in people’s homes to those who form part of an extended household (or “bubble”). Regulation 6 provides that a limited number of people (4 people excluding children under 11) from different households can meet away from the home. However, there are some limited exceptions to these rules where it may be reasonably necessary to gather and there is no reasonably practicable alternative.

Exceptions include certain “organised” activities involving up to 15 people meeting indoors and 30 people outdoors. Examples of what might constitute an exceptions for a gathering are provided under Regulation 6(5). One such exception in the Regulations is to allow a limited number of people to gather to attend a reception to celebrate a marriage or civil partnership.

Regulation 6(6)(e) makes exceptions for:

- participating in a gathering of **no more than 15 people**, not including persons under the age of 11, at regulated premises to—
 - (i) celebrate a solemnisation of a marriage or formation of a civil partnership that takes place on or after 22 August 2020.

The guidance

A wedding or civil partnership reception can be held for up to 15 people at a regulated premises (such as pubs, restaurants, hotels or community centres), as long as ‘all reasonable measures’ are taken to minimise the risk of spreading of coronavirus. This will include limitations on the type of activity that can take place – for example loud music should not be played, and any food provided should be served at the table rather than at a buffet. The limit on those who can be present do not include children under 11 or staff working at the event.

The Welsh Government’s [guidance on the national rules](#) state:

A maximum of 15 people can attend a wedding or civil partnership reception or a wake after a funeral, as long as this takes place in a

regulated premises. The number of people who can attend a wedding or civil partnership ceremony or funeral depends on the premises in which it takes place.

Information for regulated premises on the rules for holding wedding receptions can be found in the [guidance on holding wedding receptions](#).

Whilst holding receptions at regulated premises is prescribed in law, there is also a regulation that provides for holding and attending outdoor events. Regulation 6(6)(j) of the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus Restrictions\) \(No. 4\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) (as amended) makes provision for people to participate in or facilitate an **outdoor organised activity** at which no more than 30 people are in attendance. This figure does not include under 11s, and no alcohol can be consumed at such an event.

While the regulation does not specifically refer to wedding or civil partnership receptions, the Welsh Government's '[Guidance to local authorities, approved premises and places of worship on marriages and civil partnerships: coronavirus](#)' states:

Wedding receptions of up to 15 people are permitted indoors or organised events of up to 30 people can take place outdoors. The consumption of alcohol is permitted as part of the indoor celebration but this should only accompany a sit-down meal.

3. Senedd action

The Senedd's Petitions Committee has previously considered a [petition calling for wedding ceremonies to be permitted during the first national lockdown](#). This petition was introduced before wedding ceremonies were allowed to proceed, and did not relate to wedding receptions.

On 23 of September 2020, [Mark Isherwood MS in a written question to Ministers](#) asked whether the Welsh Government had 'any immediate plans to reduce wedding receptions limits from 30 to 15 people as in England?'. The Welsh Government's response stated that:

We have no current plans to amend the 30 person limit for wedding receptions. We will continue to keep the position under review but at present, there is no substantive evidence that weddings and receptions have been the source of significant transmission.

On the 3 November 2020 in an oral statement in Plenary, the First Minister confirmed that:

There will be a separate exception for up to 15 people to attend a reception for a wedding or civil partnership or a funeral wake, and children under 11 will not count towards the limits on meeting others in these regulated settings.

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-05-1057
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/01690/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

12 November 2020

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter of 20 October about the petition to increase the number of people who can attend a wedding reception.

Prior to the firebreak period, which ended on 9 November, the regulations enabled up to 30 people to gather for a wedding reception. This was one of the few exceptions allowing people to gather indoors. This recognised the importance of allowing family and friends to celebrate the happy event.

During the firebreak, receptions could not be held, although the legal marriage or civil partnership ceremony could still take place. After 9 November, receptions will be able to be held once again for up to 15 people.

Where the reception takes place indoors, it will need to take place in regulated premises (such as pubs, restaurants, hotels or community centres) and there are limits on the type of activity that can take place – for example, loud music should not be played, and any food provided should be served at the table rather than at a buffet. The limits on those who can be present do not include children under 11 or staff working at the event.

For more information, please see our guidance on holding wedding receptions:
<https://gov.wales/risk-assessments-wedding-venues-and-events>

The petitioner compares gathering for a wedding reception with having a meal in a restaurant. There is a distinct difference between the two events. A gathering is a group of

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people who come together for the same purpose and mingling between households significantly increases risk of the virus spreading. People may go to a restaurant for a meal but not mix socially with others in the venue and our regulations re-inforce this. In a gathering where people know each other and have come together to celebrate a happy event mingling is more natural and therefore requires careful management.

The scientific evidence shows that the virus is spreads more easily indoors because it can survive in the atmosphere and on surfaces for a very long time without direct sunshine and adequate ventilation. For that reason limiting the number who can gather indoors, even with mitigations such as social distancing and good hygiene measures, is important to reduce the risk of transmission and to protect loved ones from the virus.

There is international evidence of wedding receptions becoming super-spreader events. These events across the world underline the importance of taking a cautious approach.

Best wishes,

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

MARK DRAKEFORD

Agenda Item 2.10

P-05-1058 Prevent a second national lockdown in Wales

This petition was submitted by Taylor Harris having collected a total of 160 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The Welsh Government is considering imposing a second national lockdown in Wales. This will be disastrous for people's livelihoods and well-being.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Neath
- South Wales West



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-1058
Ein cyf/Our ref: FM -/01699/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

petitions@senedd.wales

16 November 2020

Dear Chair,

I am writing in response to your letter of 20 October regarding a petition about a second national lockdown.

As you will know, we have just completed a 17-day firebreak period – also known as a circuit breaker – in Wales, which began on 23 October and ended on 9 November.

The Welsh Government introduced this firebreak period on the very clear advice of our scientific and medical advisers. The scientific advice underpinning our decision is set out in the report by the Technical Advisory Cell, which is published at: <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-fire-breaks>

Coronavirus has been spreading rapidly throughout Wales and is prevalent in every part of Wales. This short, sharp firebreak intervention was designed to help to bring coronavirus back under control. If we did not act, there was a very real risk our NHS would become overwhelmed and even more people would lose their lives as a result.

A new set of national measures have come into force from November 9, replacing the very strict firebreak restrictions and the local restrictions, which were in place in many parts of Wales prior to 23 October. These arrangements will be reviewed in two weeks' time.

The success of the firebreak will not be known for some weeks yet because of the time it takes for symptoms to appear. However, coronavirus will not disappear after the firebreak – it will still be with us. If we are to keep coronavirus under control, we all need to think about

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our own lives and how we can keep our families safe. We need to stop thinking about the maximum limit of the rules and regulations.

Coronavirus is a highly infectious virus – it thrives on contact between people. To keep each other safe we need to reduce the number of people we have contact with and the amount of time we spend with them.

The new national measures are designed to maximise the impact and gains of the firebreak but we cannot go back to the way we were living our lives and throw away all that hard work. We all have an ongoing role to play in keeping Wales safe.

Best wishes,

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

MARK DRAKEFORD

Agenda Item 2.11

P-05-1059 Classify Places of Worship as essential, to allow people to attend church during lockdowns

This petition was submitted by Clyde Thomas having collected a total of 3,591 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Places of worship have been classified as non-essential by Welsh Government. This means that churches have been effectively classed as of similar importance to retail shops and are unable to hold services during "firebreak" or "lockdown". There is no evidence that churches have contributed to the spread of Covid-19. Churches have been one of the best examples of Covid-safe environments, and have wholeheartedly followed extensive, prohibitive guidelines to do their part for the nation.

Additional Information:

Whilst some have argued that churches can still operate online, this is to the detriment of the community. This is resulting in unnecessary harm, when there is no evidence that churches have contributed to the spread of Covid-19.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Torfaen
- South Wales East

P-05-1059 Classify Places of Worship as essential, to allow people to attend church during lockdowns

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14570

Petition Number: P-05-1059

Petition title: Classify Places of Worship as essential, to allow people to attend church during lockdowns

Text of petition: "Places of worship have been classified as non-essential by Welsh Government. This means that churches have been effectively classed as of similar importance to retail shops and are unable to hold services during "firebreak" or "lockdown". There is no evidence that churches have contributed to the spread of Covid-19. Churches have been one of the best examples of Covid-safe environments, and have wholeheartedly followed extensive, prohibitive guidelines to do their part for the nation.

Whilst some have argued that churches can still operate online, this is to the detriment of the community. This is resulting in unnecessary harm, when there is no evidence that churches have contributed to the spread of Covid-19."



1. Background

Places of worship were required to close except in certain circumstances during the UK-wide lockdown between March and June, and the Welsh ‘firebreak’ lockdown between 23 October and 8 November. The current Welsh Government guidance allows places of worship to open for services and ceremonies, but with social distancing and other measures in place.

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (which is incorporated in UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998) provides **everyone with the right to manifest one’s religion or beliefs**. It is a ‘qualified’ right rather than an ‘absolute’ right, which means that **it can be limited in certain circumstances**. Any interference with the right must be proportionate, lawful and necessary in the interests of public safety, the protection of health or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others (among other grounds).

Unconnected to this petition, an advocacy group called Christian Concern is campaigning for churches to be exempt from lockdowns in England and Wales. On 23 October, the group coordinated a letter to First Minister as part of a ‘pre-action’ protocol for judicial review, which was signed by a number of Welsh church leaders. It claimed the firebreak restrictions were an “**extreme interference with Article 9 rights**”, and that “[s]uch a far-reaching and large-scale intervention may only be justified by the most compelling scientific evidence of a resulting benefit to public health.” This was followed up on 29 October by another letter following a response from the Welsh Government (which does not appear to be published).

On 2 November, a similar pre-action letter was sent to the UK Government relating to the lockdown in England.

2. Welsh Government action

In its October report on firebreaks, the Wales Technical Advisory Cell **estimated the impact of the closure of places of worship on the Rt:**

“**Closure of places of worship / community centre: Low to moderate impact (moderate confidence)**

Potential reduction in Rt of up to 0.1, though precise estimation very

difficult. Strong association with places of worship including significant outbreaks linked to religious community in South Korea, cases in churches in Singapore, and Germany (despite social distancing). Environmental risks vary depending on the building. Small venues higher risk than large spaces as the volume mitigates aerosol transmission. Some ceremonies involve touch surfaces and proximity for short duration (e.g. communion).”

UK-wide lockdown regulations and impact assessments

The **regulations** that imposed the lockdown in Wales in **March** required places of worship to close, except for: funerals, the broadcasting of services, the provision of voluntary services, or the provision of urgent public services (such as food banks, support for homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation or emergency support) upon the request of Welsh Ministers or a local authority.

The **impact assessment** of the regulations published in June assessed the potential positive and negative impacts of reopening places of worship (p26). Subsequent **impact assessments** have also considered the impact of restrictions on Article 9 rights, but state that the restrictions are based on “justifiable public health grounds”.

Firebreak lockdown regulations and impact assessments

The **regulations** that imposed the ‘**firebreak**’ in Wales in October/November required places of worship to close, except for: funerals, the solemnization of marriages or formation of civil partnerships, the broadcasting of services, the provision of essential voluntary services, or the provision of public services upon the request of Welsh Ministers or a local authority.

The **impact assessment** of the firebreak restrictions noted the **negative impact on people with religious beliefs** and considered allowing services to be broadcast as a mitigation measure. It also highlighted that older people were more likely to attend places of worship and so increased their risk of becoming infected.

The impact assessment acknowledged the **interference with Article 9 rights**, but states:

“The fundamental purpose of all the coronavirus restrictions has been to **protect everyone’s right to life (Article 2 of the ECHR)**. Whilst the package of measures agreed for implementation between 23 October

and 9 November will infringe on many of the ECHR articles, this is considered **proportionate in seeking to preserve life**.

It is also important to note the decision to implement a two week firebreak - with severe restrictions for households and widespread closures in the economy - **strikes a balance between protecting public health and the social, financial, economic and well-being harms caused by the restrictions**. A longer period would cause greater harms to people's lives and livelihoods. The tighter restrictions during this short period are intended to reduce the need for further restrictions, although this cannot be ruled out."

The updated impact assessment states that reopening places of worship will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of people with religious beliefs.

Faith Communities Forum

The Welsh Government has a Faith Communities Forum and the minutes of the Forum's meetings in April and June provide an overview of discussions about the impact of restrictions on religious communities in Wales. The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt wrote to faith leaders on 23 March regarding the first lockdown.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The closure of places of worship during the firebreak has been raised in plenary a number of times.

On 20 October, in response to a question from Darren Millar MS, the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd Rebecca Evans MS stated that she appreciated the importance of worship to people's wellbeing, and "the evidence published by the Government that was received from the TAC group [...] sets out the importance of minimising the contacts that we have. We can't look to every single type of setting, because we're looking at people's contacts in the round and trying to minimise the number of contacts that we have. But I do appreciate the difficulties that it will cause people".

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-05-1059
Ein cyf/Our ref: FM -/01697/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd

Petitions@senedd.wales

3 November 2020

Dear Chair

I am writing to respond to your letter regarding a petition about attendance at places of worship.

I understand the concerns raised by the petitioner. However, these are not decisions we have taken lightly.

The scientific advice the government received is that a short and deep firebreak lockdown is necessary to curtail the rapid rise in cases of the virus, to prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed in the coming weeks and ultimately to save lives.

There are very few options in front of us – without a firebreak now, we face the prospect of a more drawn-out set of restrictions, similar to the open-ended lockdown of the spring, which ultimately would be a greater impingement on all our lives.

I recognise and applaud the responsible contribution faith groups have made in responding to the pandemic by creating new ways of practising faith and making sure worship can take place in a safe environment. I am extremely grateful to the faith leaders who have worked closely with us to develop guidance and communicate with the wider faith community. I am confident that this has made an important contribution to the management of the pandemic.

However, we continue to face a situation where transmission rates are too high. Transmission can only be limited by reducing the number of contacts we each have with one another and in this context it is not a judgement on the relative value of the activity that has guided our decision, it is the immediacy or long-lasting impact of the harm that results.

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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.

The advice we have received is that the firebreak must be intensive and we must stay at home as much as possible to limit our contact with others. We are asking people to make sacrifices for a time-limited period so we can regain control of this pandemic and protect people in Wales.

I hope this offers you and your petitioner an explanation of our decision.

Best wishes

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

MARK DRAKEFORD

P-05-1059 Classify Places of Worship as essential, to allow people to attend church during lockdowns, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.11.20

Whilst I and the other signatories understand the challenges at this time relating to Covid-19, to make public worship illegal is an incredibly bold move by any government. This is a constitutional right that goes back hundreds of years and thousands are concerned that a vast overstepping of our liberties has taken place here. We are simply asking that places of worship are reclassified as essential.

Prior to the firebreak lock-down, local churches like ours had worked incredibly hard to make environments Covid-safe and track and trace has revealed zero cases of transmission through our gatherings. Furthermore, the scientific evidence points to the fact that closing churches makes no change to the 'R' rate, meanwhile making a huge difference to the victims of mental health crisis who would otherwise have the support they need from us.

For Christians, assembling together is a Biblical mandate, the 'Ekklesia' (original biblical text language) means the gathering together of God's called out ones. To forsake this presents huge issues for the Christian conscience and therefore forces Christians to neglect their core values and belief, which amounts to religious discrimination.

As local church communities, we have been at the forefront of support for communities across Wales. The volunteer base that churches offer is worth billions UK wide. These volunteers ultimately are Christians who are doing this to practice their faith, but if their faith-based practice of assembling is effectively cut off, this has drastic consequences for the nation as a whole.

We also applaud the work of local churches across the UK in finding innovative ways to limit the damage that ceasing public worship has caused, but we must stress that damage limitation cannot be allowed to continue. Zoom, and online church may reach some people, but statistics now show that 1 in 3 people have stopped attending church, and up to 70% of people are disengaged from online facilities. Online is simply not a valid alternative to in-person, Covid-safe services.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Agenda Item 2.12

P-05-1061 Give financial support to Pet Boarding businesses

This petition was submitted by Ryan Lee having collected a total of 2,144 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The latest grants made available are for those in lockdown areas or business development. Many Pet Boarding businesses outside lockdown areas have seen customer numbers fall to zero. The Business Development Grants can not be used to pay the monthly bills. Pet Boarding Businesses need financial support now to stop them going out of business. Hundreds of jobs and homes are at risk without adequate financial support.

Additional Information:

Pet Boarding businesses have struggle to keep the doors open to assist NHS staff working long hours fighting Covid, they have helped care for pets of people who have been hospitalised. In many cases having one or two pets in at a time costs them more than they earn and with increased heating and lighting bills over the winter months many will be forced to close, removing this vital service.

These are businesses that were successful before Covid and will be again as long as action is taken to protect them.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

P-05-1061 Give financial support to pet boarding businesses

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14570-8

Petition Number: P-05-1061

Petition title: Give financial support to Pet Boarding businesses

Text of petition:

The latest grants made available are for those in lockdown areas or business development. Many Pet Boarding businesses outside lockdown areas have seen customer numbers fall to zero. The Business Development Grants cannot be used to pay the monthly bills. Pet Boarding Businesses need financial support now to stop them going out of business. Hundreds of jobs and homes are at risk without adequate financial support.

Pet Boarding businesses have struggle to keep the doors open to assist NHS staff working long hours fighting Covid, they have helped care for pets of people who have been hospitalised. In many cases having one or two pets in at a time costs them more than they earn and with increased heating and lighting bills over the winter months many will be forced to close, removing this vital service.

These are businesses that were successful before Covid and will be again as long as action is taken to protect them.



1. Background

Businesses and workers have faced considerable impacts since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and the Welsh and UK governments have developed a range of measures to assist them. The Research Service has published an article [outlining the various business support schemes available](#) in addition to an article on [support available through the benefits system](#). Both are updated regularly.

Whilst there is no sector specific support available to pet boarding businesses, they may be able to access certain schemes dependent upon the eligibility criteria.

The petitioner refers to two schemes – support available to those in local lockdown areas and to business development grants – which they suggest do not provide adequate support for those in the trade. More information on these is outlined below.

It is worth noting that a number of the schemes available from the UK and Welsh Governments are to support businesses forced to close as a result of coronavirus restrictions. However pet boarding businesses have been able to remain open throughout the coronavirus pandemic in order to provide services for key workers and others, as [highlighted in guidance published by the Association of Dog Boarders](#) for pet business owners.

Whilst pet boarding businesses have remained open, the petitioner highlights that many have experienced significantly reduced demand.

Welsh Government Support

The petitioner refers to support only available to those in local lockdown areas. On 29 September 2020, the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales [made a statement in Plenary](#) in relation to Phase 3 of the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF).

Members will be aware that at the time of the statement, a number of areas in Wales were subject to local lockdown restrictions. Since then, a national [firebreak lockdown](#) has been implemented (which required a number of businesses to close between 23 October and 9 November) followed by a [new set of national restrictions](#).

Ahead of the firebreak, on 20 October the Minister for Economy, Finance and North Wales issued a statement announcing additional funding as part of the ERF. The Research Service's blog article on coronavirus business support provides a comprehensive overview of the different funding and support now available through the ERF and the eligibility criteria that applies. This includes detail of grants provided through the Lockdown Business Fund. The support available to businesses who pay non-domestic rates was:

- Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value of £12,001 to £51,000 required to close for the firebreak lockdown under *The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 3) (Wales) Regulations 2020* were eligible for a grant of £5,000; and
- Businesses which are eligible for Small Business Rate Relief, charitable relief or Community Amateur Sports Club relief with a rateable value of up to £12,000 were eligible for a grant of £1,000. **They were also entitled to a further grant of £1,000 if they were subject to local lockdown restrictions for 3 or more weeks prior to 23 October**, and saw a reduction in turnover of this period of at least 50%. In addition, these businesses were eligible for a further grant of £2,000 if required to close for the firebreak lockdown under the coronavirus regulations.

Discretionary support was also announced for businesses who do not pay business rates:

- Businesses required to close for the firebreak lockdown under the coronavirus regulations or which could demonstrate that the firebreak lockdown reduced their turnover by at least 80% over this period were eligible to apply for a grant of £1,500; and
- Businesses who met the above criteria, and were also subject to local lockdown restrictions for 3 or more weeks prior to 23 October and saw a reduction in turnover of this period of at least 50%, were able to apply for a grant of £2,000.

The petitioner also refers to Business Development Grants, which were one element of phase 3 of the ERF. These grants are available to support firms to transition to the future economy. The petitioner highlights that forms of support such as this cannot “be used to pay the monthly bills”. The support available was:

- Micro businesses (employing between 1 and 9 people) were able to apply for up to £10,000. Tourism and hospitality businesses, and those in sectors required to close were able to receive 100% grant funding. Businesses in other sectors were required to match grant funding received with their own investment of at least 10%;

- SMEs (employing between 10 and 249 people) were able to apply for up to £150,000. Tourism and hospitality businesses, and those in sectors required to close were able to receive 100% grant funding. Businesses in other sectors were required to match grant funding received with their own investment of at least 10% for small businesses (1 to 49 staff) and 20% for medium sized (50 to 249) businesses; and
- Large businesses (employing 250+ people) were able to apply for up to £200,000 on the condition they match this with their own investment of at least 50%.

On 28 October the Welsh Government issued a [press release](#) announcing that Phase 3 of the ERF was open for applications. This stated that **eligible businesses that did not qualify for “business rates linked grants...[could] apply for awards of up to £2,000 from a £25 million discretionary fund via their local authority”**.

Subsequently, the application process for Business Development Grants ~~was suspended~~ on 29 October, as the fund was fully subscribed due to the large number of applications received. The business rates grants from the Lockdown Business Fund closed for applications on 20 November, while the discretionary grants remain open in some local authority areas at the time of writing.

UK Government support

In his statement regarding Phase 3 of the ERF, the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales stated that the Welsh Government’s support “aims to complement and supplement other UK Government schemes”.

These schemes include [the Bounce Back Loans scheme](#) and the [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#). More detail is provided in the Research Service blog article on business support (link above).

The UK Government has also developed a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme - which may be able to provide support to those who run businesses such as pet boarding facilities.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

The UK Government’s [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme](#) allows self-employed people whose income has been negatively affected by coronavirus to claim a taxable cash grant.

It is available to people whose annual trading profits were less than £50,000 in 2018-19 (or whose annual trading profits averaged less than £50,000 a year in the

period 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19), and where more than half of their income comes from self-employment. It is only available to people who traded in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 tax years, have submitted their 2018-19 tax return, and who are continuing to trade but are still being affected by the pandemic.

The Chancellor has recently announced that two further rounds of the grant will be opened from November 2020 to April 2021, for businesses who continue to be affected by the pandemic. From 30 November, businesses will be able to apply for a grant of 80% of average monthly trading profits between November 2020 and January 2021, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £7,500 in total.

As outlined later in this brief, the issue of support for those who are self-employed has been raised in the Senedd. In particular, concerns have been raised over the fact that a number of people are still not eligible for support. For example, those who have only recently become self-employed would not meet the eligibility criteria for the UK Government scheme. These issues have also been reported in the media.

2. Welsh Government action

In her letter to the Chair dated 30 October 2020, the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd refers to a number of the support schemes put in place by the Welsh Government to support businesses as detailed above.

The Minister's letter references schemes available to businesses forced to close as a result of coronavirus restrictions, however, as outlined, pet boarding businesses have been able to remain open.

The Minister also refers support available through the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). This is a separate fund from the business support schemes outlined above. Whilst the fund existed to provide emergency support to those experiencing hardship prior to the pandemic, the Minister's letter refers to an extra £5million being made available through the DAF which can provide grants to people in need of urgent help during the crisis. This includes those waiting for benefit payments.

In her letter, the Minister encourages any business in need of support to contact Business Wales.

On 11 November, the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales told the Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee that **the Welsh Government will operate a fourth phase of the Economic Resilience Fund in early 2021**. He stated that:

You'll be aware that the finance Minister has set aside £300 million for financial support for businesses in the first quarter of 2021, and we're keen to make sure that the focus is on supporting jobs. Everything right now is about supporting people in employment, avoiding mass unemployment and avoiding the scarring that is associated with it. So, we're looking at how we can support businesses through the winter, into the first quarter of 2021, and to the point where we would hope there will be an array of vaccines available. We can't guarantee it—obviously, nothing can be taken for granted—but that £300 million is there, available for business support, and we want to make sure that we use further business support to protect businesses from the potential impacts of the end of the transition period as well.

The Minister for Economy and Transport also stated in Plenary on 11 November that he is looking at how to use an underspend of £35 million from the first phase of the ERF.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee undertook an inquiry into the impacts of the pandemic. Reporting on its early findings in June 2020 (PDF,208KB), the Committee highlighted the evidence it had heard that there are gaps in the support available to businesses. In particular, the Committee heard evidence from the FSB Wales likening the package of support to “a lattice...,it's covering lots of areas but there are gaps”. Specific examples included self-employed people who did not have recent accounts and were therefore unable to access the support schemes, businesses that do not have a premises, and companies that are not VAT registered.

The issue of support for those who are self-employed and not eligible for a range of business support schemes has also been raised in Plenary a number of times. Most recently, the issue has been discussed on 21 October and 11 November.

In response to Members highlighting examples where their constituents have not been eligible for support, the Welsh Ministers have referred to the £25 million

discretionary fund administered by local authorities as part of the Lockdown Business Fund.

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.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1061
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00824/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Member of the Senedd
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

30 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 27 October regarding the petition for financial support for the pet boarding industry in Wales.

We have created an enhanced Phase 3 of our Wales-only Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) of almost £300m, which includes an extra £150m to support to businesses affected by the firebreak.

In addition, the Welsh Government has now also stepped in to increase by £5 million the £20 million discretionary fund provided to local authorities to support businesses retain those workers at risk of falling through the gaps in support. This fund is on top of the £300 million package of grants.

An extra £5 million will also be provided to the Discretionary Assistance Fund which provides grants to people in need of urgent help during the crisis, including those waiting for benefit payments and those in employment who are facing hardship:

<https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf>

The demand for the Business Development Grants has been exceptional, and at the point of writing the fund is paused to allow an assessment of applications made against fund value. Please refer to this page for updates:

<https://fundchecker.businesswales.gov.wales/erfphase3>

The Lockdown Business Fund (which includes the aforementioned discretionary grant) is also open for applications, via local authorities, now:

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice/lockdown-business-fund>

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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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.

Whilst only one element (£20m) of the Business Development Grant is linked to Tourism specifically, £80m of it is available across the economy and both other elements are open to non-tourism businesses.

Most businesses required to close should also be able to access the support available from the UK Government – through the existing Job Retention Scheme or the new expanded Job Support Scheme.

The package has been designed to be affordable within the available funding, and we had to take difficult decisions on the eligibility criteria. The measures we have taken are in addition to those provided by the UK Government, making the support package in Wales the most comprehensive and generous in the UK.

We will also go on pressing the UK Government to be responsive and responsible in terms of supporting those who continue to fall through the gaps, who have yet to receive support that is required in order to ensure that their enterprises can survive this pandemic.

Business Wales also has a wide range of non-financial advisory support available. Any business affected is encouraged to visit the Business Wales website <https://businesswales.gov.wales> or contact the Business Wales helpline on 03000 6 03000. The Business Wales Helpline is available Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

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

P-05-1061 Give financial support to Pet Boarding businesses, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 17.11.20

To the committee,

Please find my response to the points raised by the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd Rebecca Evans.

She first points to Phase 3 of the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF 3). The problems with this fund lie, both in the criteria for gaining access to the fund and the restrictions of what the fund can be used for. Businesses MUST be VAT registered and have a member of staff paid through PAYE. As an industry many of our businesses are family run and so either do not employ staff or employ people on a self-employed basis. Others, such as medium sized kennels or cattery's have turnovers below the VAT threshold. This rules out the vast majority of our industry from accessing this help. Those few businesses that do meet all the criteria still find the ERF 3 unhelpful as it can only be used for business development and can not be used to pay regular bills. Pet boarding facilities are unable to move there businesses online and the only way to develop is to add more capacity which is counter productive when there are not enough customers to fill existing spaces.

The other two options mentioned by Rebecca Evans are the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) and the Lockdown Business Fund (LBF). The DAF is only of assistance to individuals and does not help businesses survive. The LBF was a very welcome boost but at £1000 it was only designed to assist with surviving the two-week firebreak lockdown. It is a long way short of constituting adequate support for businesses who have had 9 months of close to zero trade and will continue to be severely affected until national and international travel returns to normal.

As an Industry we face similar problems to those faced by hotels, camp sites and other Leisure & Tourism businesses but are classed as a Service Sector industry. With travel severely restricted and people's confidence in travelling severely knocked our income has been and continues to be reduced to nearly zero.

As an industry we have kept our doors open to help key workers, those requiring a stay in hospital and those self-isolating even though doing so has, in most cases, cost more in heating, lighting etc than is earned through housing one or two pets at a time in a facility designed to hold 30.

We are calling on the Senedd to take Three steps to protect the pet boarding industry from collapse. Firstly we need an adequate support package to help businesses pay the bills so that we, as owners, can focus on protecting Jobs of those we employ and protecting our homes that are tied into our businesses. The second measure we would like to see is for all councils to be mandated to cancel licence fees for 2021. This would ease pressure on businesses already over stretched finances. Finally, we ask that our industry be recognised as a integral part of the Leisure and Tourism sector.

I have included 3 case studies below to assist in your consideration of this matter.

Case Study 1

County: *Cardiff*

Animals Boarded: *Cats*

No. Of animals licenced for: 48

Since the start of the pandemic I have received support from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, the first payment was £915 and the second payment was £801. I received such low payments because it was calculated on average profits over a 3 year period, I had reinvested in the business for 2 out of the 3 years therefore bringing profits down. I feel like I have been punished for trying to improve my business.

My turnover for period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 was £39,000, for the current year to date its down to £6,000 (for same period last year I was on £29,000). My turnover in October last year was £3,000, this year it is only £52.50.

The council License fee is £287.00 for 2021, at my current level of trade it will take over 5 months to earn that amount. I am hoping for increased trade over the Christmas period, however, usually by this time of year I am fully booked for Christmas. This year I have 3 bookings, all of whom booked last January and are probably hoping they may still be able to go so have not cancelled yet.

In March I had a flood victims' cats which were brought in during the early hours on a Sunday morning (this was just before Covid 19 lockdown). I had them until they could find temporary accommodation and did not charge her, I told her to pay it forward and help someone else in need. I had no customers at all from the start of the pandemic until mid-July, of the customers I have had since July, a large proportion of them have been key workers who had worked all the way through the lockdown and needed a well-earned break.

I have applied for all stages of the ERF but have not been eligible as I do not pay anyone on PAYE. I was not eligible for the Business Rates Grant because, despite my asking, my council had not been out to rate me and said they could not backdate it. I have not avoided paying rates as the rateable value of my premises would be below the threshold and would fall into the small business exemption. I have just applied for the discretionary grant, however, this will be scant consolation to being left out of all other support.

Covid 19 will have a long-lasting effect on our industry and will not fully recover until people can freely travel, both in the UK and abroad. In previous years, a large proportion of my customers have been traveling abroad. This year I found that bookings have been for shorter periods and nobody has had the traditional 2 week holiday, it has been long weekends or a week at most. This has led to lower earnings and more work disinfecting between customers. I have unsuccessfully applied for over 20 temporary jobs in the last month and i am looking at work options. I could do that and still be able to accept customers at the current low levels, this will keep the business going for when things hopefully pick up.

Case Study 2

County: Vale of Glamorgan

Animals Boarded: Cats

No. Of animals licenced for: 12

I received the £10,000 Welsh Government Business Support grant that helped for the first 6 months with me reducing all my outgoings (mortgage holiday, reduced franchise fee etc).

My normal turnover is about £22,000, I have only been trading for two years and I was just starting to build up the business. Currently I have no customers and haven't since local lockdowns were

introduced. This month I have had £145 in deposits for future bookings, but my business expenses have eaten that up and left me in the red. In comparison, last October my incomings were £1986.50 despite being closed for three weeks as it was my 50th and my whole family went away.

My council licence fee is £211 and at current trading levels I will not earn enough this year to pay it.

One of my regular customers was extremely ill with Covid and I went to her house to collect her cats to look after. I dropped them off months later when she had recovered and provided her with emotional support, she is from Pakistan and working in the country, she has no family here.

I have attempted to claim The Self Employment Income Support scheme, however I am not eligible for this as I have only been trading for two years and my tax returns are not in profit yet. The ERF does not help either as my business does not have a high enough turnover and does not have any PAYE employees. I tried to access the loans that have been made available but have been told I am not eligible because I am not able to prove I can afford to repay.

I was not on the VOA register for business rates when Covid hit because I was told I did not need to be by the council when I set up my business. In order to be eligible for the business grant you needed to be on the register. It was nigh on impossible to do this as you just couldn't get through to the VOA at that time (their phones were off and they were not responding to emails). Fortunately, I am part of a franchise and the founder has a contact in the VOA and was able to get me on the register retrospectively with two days to spare. The months in between this were horrendous. I sought help from my local councillors, my MP, business wales, the local council (economic development, the leader, the staff processing applications and the Vale tourism team). Whilst everyone agreed that I should have been on the register and was eligible, the council refused to approve my application, they were obstructive and unhelpful despite intervention by my MP. I was extremely fortunate to know someone who knows someone; I know that other people, including other catteries in this area, were not so lucky.

Case Study 3

County: Pembrokeshire

Animals Boarded: Dogs

No. Of animals licenced for: 30

Up to now the only support we have received is the Business Rates Relief Grant of £10,000. This has helped us get through the initial lockdown but is about to run out. It has lasted longer than it has for most businesses as I have been lucky enough to receive help from my retired parents and the bank allowing me a 12 month capital repayment holiday. Despite the holiday granted by the bank the interest payments remain high due to the fact that I took out the loan to buy the business 12 months ago so have only paid back a small amount of the capital. We have made use of the furlough scheme and are pleased to see it extended as the Job Support Scheme would have cost us too much to retain our staff. I, personally, have been claiming Universal Credit, however this is set to end on the 15th November unless the Government decide to extend it further.

The business had been running for 15 year prior to my purchase of it, it has generally turned over £70,000 to £75,000 per annum. Last October we has an income of £5008.50 compared to this year where it was £994.50 with our current turnover for 20/21 at £8776.50. Our interest payments alone on the business loan have amounted to nearly £7000.

Our council licence for 2021 has been increased to £643.50. Pembrokeshire were the highest charges in Wales before the latest increase which has only seen the disparity to other areas worsen.

During the pandemic we had a number of dogs in while their owners attended funerals and hospital appointments/emergencies. We have also had one dog come to us once a month for a holiday as her owner is self-isolating, we also took the dog for regular vet appointments for an ongoing condition to save the elderly owner, who was isolating, for having to attend herself. Continuing to operate with only one or two dogs in at any one time over the winter period will see the cost of keeping that dog increase to more than we make due to increased heating and lighting bills.

We looked at getting the ERF however we are not eligible due to not being VAT registered as we are below the turnover to be required to do so. Had we been eligible it would have been of little help as we would not be allowed to use that money to pay the bills and retain staff as it is only for business development. It is not possible to move our business online and while we could have added a cattery or extra kennels this would only lead to more empty spaces and increased costs such as maintenance and insurance.

I was unable to get any help from the Self-Employment income support scheme despite the business having a 15 year record of trading as I had only owned the business for a few months.

Agenda Item 2.13

P-05-1066 Allow choristers and youth choirs to sing in Wales and young musicians to play in groups

This petition was submitted by Phae Cole having collected a total of 861 signatures.

Text of Petition:

At the start of lockdown singing was viewed as highly dangerous, however scientific studies are showing time and again that singing is no more dangerous than speaking when carried out in an orderly risk assessed fashion. Research shows that singing is a perfectly safe to engage in, especially in large, well ventilated spaces like cathedrals. Welsh Government still are not allowing children and young people to sing as they have said due to age and underlying health issues it is too dangerous.

Additional Information:

Church in England have allowed choristers to return from September and as yet there have been no reported covid breakouts as result. Cathedrals and churches that have returned have all carried out risk assessments to ensure the safety of choir and congregation.

Much consideration has been given to the mental and physical well-being of young athletes, gymnasts and other youth sports but singers and musicians are not being given the same consideration.

Many musicians and choristers practice and train just as hard as athletes and their wellbeing and development are currently being disregarded.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport West
- South Wales East

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-05-1066
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03065/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

16 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 October about the petition to allow choristers and youth choirs to sing in groups in Wales. Under the new coronavirus regulations announced by the First Minister on 9 November, groups of no more than fifteen people can gather for an indoor activity at any one time.

Earlier in the summer, the Welsh Government published guidance for a phased return for culture and heritage venues and destinations. As part of that work, we asked the Arts Council of Wales to work with our cultural sectors to develop additional guidance covering rehearsal, performance and participation. That work is now complete and the guidance, which should be considered carefully by all arts organisations across Wales, can be found here: <https://gov.wales/rehearsing-performing-and-taking-part-performing-arts-guidance-phased-return>. Particular attention should be given to the section *Singing, chanting and the use of musical instruments*.

Yours sincerely,

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@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.

P-05-1066 Allow choristers and youth choirs to sing in Wales and young musicians to play in groups, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.11.20

Dear Committee,

Thank you for considering the my petition at the next meeting. Since the petition was initiate the Welsh Government has introduced a change in the rules regarding the use of music in worship, which allows a choir (or some of them) to sing. This has brought much joy to the choristers I know and whilst it is a huge step forward the limit of 15 still causes a problem for some choirs. In my both of my daughters cathedral choir there are more than 15 girls which means that even though the space is available for them to practice together the number limitation prevents them.

Following a detailed risk assessment the MD of one choir has decided that to accommodate the requirements whilst allowing space for the congregation only 8 choristers will be able to sing with the support of 7 in the back row. Although the choristers have accepted the need for a rota approach to supporting services it would be nice if they could practice together as the space allows for them to do so safely.

However although this is fantastic for choristers, there are still many youth choirs that are unable to meet. Many music teachers, music directors and others who support youth music and the arts, find the current guidance confusing and sometime contradictory, it would be really useful if some clear guidance could be provided to allow these activities to take place providing they are done so following a full risk assessment.

It is also a shame that the Welsh Government refuse to look at the scientific evidence that allowed choirs in England to return at a much earlier time. Youth music has been shown to have so many benefits, be that for wellbeing, academic development or general development, it is a real shame that during the pandemic it has not been given the same consideration as youth sport. Whilst I have no evidence to support my next statement, I feel confident that music impacts more peoples life than sport does. Some clear guidance to allow youngsters to take part in singing and collective music, in schools and the wider community would be greatly received by many.

Kind Regards

Agenda Item 2.14

P-05-1049 Change the school summer holiday break!

This petition was submitted by Rebecca Mercer having collected a total of 84 signatures.

Text of Petition:

would like to put forward a proposal to reduce the long 6 weeks down to 4 weeks, and add the extra 2 weeks to half terms.

I think mainly October and May perhaps would be the most beneficial.

Additional Information:

The summer holiday break has been in a place for a very long time in its current form. I believe life has changed and if we could alter this pattern now, it could give us a good work/home life balance. Not just for school staff, but parents can also take advantage of cheaper holidays. With 2 half terms that have a 2 week duration it will allow for more flexibility and a reduced price for most destinations. It will also allow parents an opportunity to maintain affordable childcare, for 4 weeks rather than for a full 6 weeks. This would give everyone the chance to break this up throughout the year, hopefully resulting in less stress for all and the end of the 'dreaded summer holidays'.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport West
- South Wales East

Change the school summer holiday break!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Rhagfyr 2020
Petitions Committee | 1 December 2020

Reference: RS20/14570

Petition Number: P-05-1049

Petition title: Change the school summer holiday break!

Text of petition: I would like to put forward a proposal to reduce the long 6 weeks down to 4 weeks, and add the extra 2 weeks to half terms.

I think mainly October and May perhaps would be the most beneficial.

The summer holiday break has been in a place for a very long time in its current form. I believe life has changed and if we could alter this pattern now, it could give us a good work/home life balance. Not just for school staff, but parents can also take advantage of cheaper holidays. With 2 half terms that have a 2 week duration it will allow for more flexibility and a reduced price for most destinations. It will also allow parents an opportunity to maintain affordable childcare, for 4 weeks rather than for a full 6 weeks. This would give everyone the chance to break this up throughout the year, hopefully resulting in less stress for all and the end of the 'dreaded summer holidays'.



1. Background

Section 32A of the Education Act 2002 states that:

(1) A local authority in Wales must determine the term dates for each community, voluntary controlled or community special school or maintained nursery school in its area.

(2) A governing body of a foundation or voluntary aided school in Wales (a “relevant governing body”) must determine the term dates for its school.

Local authorities and governing bodies are required to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.

Section 32B of the 2002 Act states that the Welsh Ministers may direct a local authority in Wales or a relevant governing body to determine such term dates for a maintained school in Wales as may be specified in the direction. Ministers must consult as appropriate before making any direction.

The School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2020 (October 2020) states that:

A teacher employed full-time must be available for work for 195 days, of which:

a) 190 days must be days on which the teacher may be required to teach pupils and perform other duties; and

b) 5 days must be days on which the teacher may only be required to perform other duties.

Other staff employed to work in schools, such as support staff, catering staff or cleaners have different terms and conditions of employment.

2. Welsh Government action

In December 2017, the Welsh Government appointed Professor Mick Waters to chair a panel to carry out an independent review of School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions. The report of the review, Teaching, a valued profession (September 2108) included a recommendation that:

A major Commission should be established to 'Re-imagine schooling in Wales'. This commission should be established immediately and required to carry out deep investigation, research and wide-ranging consultation with a view to reporting by December 2020. The resultant shared 'Vision for 2030' would offer a plan of gradual transition for schooling to systems and practices that would offer a truly 21st century provision.

The commission would look at how we would change the school system to fit with modern and anticipated future life for families and communities. Should the rhythm of the school year, the pattern of terms and holidays and the shape of the school day be rethought?

On **9 July 2019, in a Written Statement**, Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education, announced that an Expert Panel had been appointed, led by Professor Waters to take forward the first phase of this work. The role of Expert Panel in Phase 1 was to research and assess how schooling works for pupils, their families, teachers and support staff in Wales, and to identify the key themes that need further consideration.

A report, which was to due be submitted by September 2019, was to form the basis for an in-depth research and consultation process which would be taken forward for Phase 2 of the process. The Minister said that a full commission would be established later in the year. In her letter to the Committee, the Minister states that this work has 'stalled', due to issued related to the Covid 19 pandemic.

3. Position in England

In England, local authority maintained schools must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. The school year must begin after July. Term dates are determined by school employers. The local authority is the employer for community, voluntary-controlled, community special or maintained nursery schools. For foundation, voluntary-aided and foundation special schools, the employer is the governing body. Academies, including free schools, set their own term dates

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.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1049
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05987/20
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Member of the Senedd
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

2 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 19 October seeking my views on Petition P-05-1049 Change the school summer holiday break.

Schools play an important role in every child and young person's life, and at the heart of Our National Mission has been the recognition that we need to see the school system evolve as part of our wider ambitions for education in Wales. With that in mind, Professor Mick Waters was asked to undertake an initial look at re-imagining schooling in Wales. Part of its focus was on how the traditional school year could be changed to better suit learning and teaching in the 21st century, with consideration also being given to the role of schools in wider society.

Unfortunately, owing to the shift in priorities resulting from the coronavirus pandemic this year, and the difficulties involved in engaging across the schools system at this time, this work has stalled and I am unable to say with certainty when we might be able to conclude a review.

The setting of school term dates is currently set out in regulations. The Education (Consultation on School Term Dates) (Wales) Regulations 2014 require local authorities and the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools to set school term dates. They place a duty on them to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other when setting term dates, so that the dates set are the same or as similar as possible. Under current law the Welsh Ministers have no role in the setting of school term dates.

Any future review of the existing structure of term times would need to closely involve local authorities and consortia to ensure consistency across Wales. Also, as any changes to existing school term arrangements, including the length of school terms and holidays, would have wide-ranging impacts on the general public and school staff, there would need to be a

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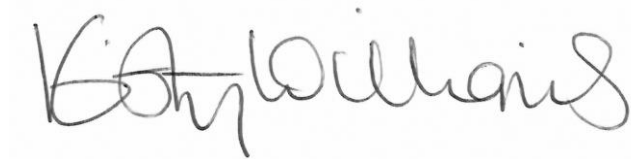
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

wider civic conversation. Issues to consider, for example, would include the effect on teachers' pay and conditions, the timing of public examinations and potential impacts on learner performance and childcare arrangements for parents.

I do believe that this matter warrants further research and review, however at present I am unable to commit the resources it would require. Therefore I am not currently minded to change the law to give Welsh Ministers power over setting term times.

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

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



Ein cyf/Our ref JM/01323/20

Janet Finch-Saunders
Chair
Petitions Committee

5 November 2020

Dear Janet,

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

Thank you for your letter dated 7 August and for sharing the letters you had received from the following:

Encl:

1. Switalskis Solicitors to Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, 20 May 2020
2. Ben Lake MP to Chair of the Petitions Committee, 28 May 2020
3. Dyfed Powys Police to Caldey Island Victims Campaign Coordinator, 1 June 2020
4. Watkins and Gunn Solicitors to Chair of the Petitions Committee, 5 June 2020
5. Caldey Island Victims Campaign Coordinator to Chair of the Petitions Committee, 29 June 2020
6. Petitioner to Petitions Committee, 8 July 2020

With the exception of the first letter from Switalskis Solicitors this is the first time the Government is seeing the other 5 letters you have shared.

The Welsh Government has considered our position in light of the correspondence you shared and provide this further response to our previous letter dated 6 April 2020, giving particular consideration to the indications noted by the Committee that:

- The petitioner's intended civil case against the organisation which operated and controlled monks at the Abbey is on hold pending a police investigation and the inquiry being called for;
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) will not be specifically considering the abuse which took place on Caldey Island and expressed a desire that the Welsh Government should give further consideration to the issues of a public inquiry in light of this.

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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.

Back Page 142
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 set out in my previous correspondence dated the 6 April 2020, the matter of Caldey Island has been in front of the Senedd numerous times since 2017.

Ministers have 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.

The petition you are considering says:

‘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.’

As previously advised the Welsh Government has considered this issue a number of times, and has to date resisted calls for an inquiry on the basis that it did not believe the case had been made. We have considered this decision taking into account the information that has become available since my letter to you dated the 6 April 2020, and Welsh Government’s view remains unchanged for the reasons set out below.

We were made aware of the police decision to conclude the investigation on 13 August 2020. In their letter to Ms Mulholland, dated 1 June 2020, the police confirmed their reasons for finalisation of their investigation and gave their reasons as set out below:

‘...the identified suspects are deceased; 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.’

This supports the decision set out in my letter dated 6 April not to proceed with an inquiry due to their being insufficient information available; on the basis that as the key suspects are deceased any public inquiry or otherwise would not realise any learning either from the perpetrators motivation, nor how the perpetrator managed to evade capture for such a period. This would have been a key inquiry outcome. It is also clear that as a result of the limited information available the police investigation would have little to offer any inquiry in terms of lessons learnt. We do not believe that there is sufficiently strong new information to make Welsh Government rethink its case.

We acknowledge and have considered the contribution from other correspondents who have written to the Petitions Committee in support of the petitioners call for an inquiry. We have considered these and have responded where they are material to considering the call for an inquiry.

In the event that the petitioner or any other individual, takes issue or has concern with regards to the police investigation, and/or their decision not to investigate further, it is open to them to raise this through the appropriate Police channels.

On 25 August 2020, IICSA confirmed that it held its last public hearing in its Roman Catholic Church investigation in November 2019 and is due to publish the resulting report this coming Autumn. It has also announced its final investigation and that public hearings will conclude this year, and that in these circumstances, the Inquiry will be unable also to look at allegations relating to Caldey Island in its busy investigation and public hearing programme.

Your letter asserts that IICSA “*expressed a desire that the Welsh Government should give further consideration to the issue of a public inquiry in light of this.*” IICSA has NOT expressed or indicated to Welsh Government, nor can we find a public comment attributed to IICSA of this desire.

Whilst IICSA has not specifically considered Caldey Island as part of its inquiry, there will be wide ranging lessons learnt and recommendations made as part of its investigation into Religious Institutions and Setting, and, the Anglican Church investigations. In both of these investigations Welsh Government provided witness statement to. As you may be aware only as recently as 6 October, the inquiry published its report in to the Anglican Church. It made many recommendations for the Church in England and for the Church in Wales. For the Church in Wales it included recommending that:

- operational advice of provincial safeguarding officers must be followed by all members of the clergy and other Church officers.
- those who are volunteers and who do not follow the directions of provincial safeguarding officers should be removed from working with children and this should be enshrined in policy
- provincial safeguarding officers should have the right to see personnel files of clergy, office holders, employees or others if concerns and complaints are raised about child protection or safeguarding.
- And that the Church of England and the Church in Wales should each introduce a Church-wide policy on the funding and provision of support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse concerning clergy, Church officers or those with some connection to the Church. The policy should clearly set out the circumstances in which different types of support, including counselling, should be offered. It should make clear that support should always be offered as quickly as possible, taking into account the needs of the victim over time. The policy should take account of the views of victims and survivors. It should be mandatory for the policy to be implemented across all dioceses.
- And it says the Church should have independent auditing of its safeguarding

Welsh Government is subject to the inquiry’s findings and recommendations. We have already committed to take into account any findings, lessons learnt and recommendations it makes to improve child protection and safeguarding in Wales.

Having had the opportunity to reconsider this matter, and taking into account the petitioners legal representatives letter dated the 20 May, we can confirm that the fact that the petitioner has a civil claim pending has not been taken into account when coming to this decision.

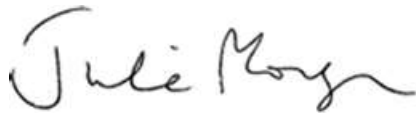
The Government also refutes the assertion that it ‘vehemently opposes’ a public inquiry and this is in some way equates to an institutional cover up. Welsh Government has given careful consideration to its position, taking into account the correspondence received since the 6 April 2020, and remains of the view that there are strong reasons not to proceed with a public inquiry.

We have yet to see the response of the Church in Wales to the IICSA recommendations and will work with the Welsh Interfaith council to ensure the recommendations are applied and acted upon.

Finally and by no means last. The Inquiry will close its doors to the Truth Project during 2021. We have urged all victims and survivors of historical abuse to share their experiences with the inquiry so that we may all learn from them. The inquiry recognises their value in both learning and providing a closure for most if not all victims and survivors. The Truth project can be contacted on 0800 917 1000, by email at contact@iicsa.org.uk or in writing at Freepost IICSA Independent Inquiry.

I understand that victims want closure and they think a public inquiry would provide this. However, on the basis of what we know, there really does not seem to be the case for one and there is no indication that a public inquiry would uncover any significant insights we do not already have into the situation. We will however of course revisit this decision in the light of any new information we receive.

Yours sincerely

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS

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

Petition P-05-954

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

Response to the Deputy Minister's letter to the Petitions Committee of 5 November 2020

Dinah Mulholland, Caldey Island Survivors Campaign Coordinator

22/11/2020

In response to the Deputy Minister's letter of 5 November 2020, David Greenwood has asked that I pass on to the Petitions Committee that his hopes were that a public inquiry would provide an explanation on the lack of police action, a fuller view of the numbers of children involved, and whether any other statutory bodies were alerted to abuse and what was their response.

I have some comments of my own that I would like to add.

Firstly, a couple of minor points. One is that the Deputy Minister states that the matter of historic child sexual abuse on Caldey Island has come before the Senedd numerous times. I have only been able to find two times when it has been discussed in the Senedd – on 29 November 2017 and on 6 February 2018. If there have been other occasions, it would be very helpful if I could be made aware of them.

The second minor point concerns the Deputy Minister's statement that:

'as the key suspects are deceased any public inquiry or otherwise would not realise any learning ... from the perpetrators motivation'

I find this statement to be a matter of some concern. The motivation of perpetrators of child sexual abuse is not, and should never be, the subject of this proposed public inquiry.

My major points are as follows:

1. Dyfed Powys Police

The Deputy Minister refers to the letter from the Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police, to me, which provides information on the finalisation of their investigation and their reasons for the decision to not investigate further:

'...the identified suspects are deceased; 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.'

The police, and the Deputy Minister, seem to believe that because the named perpetrators are dead that nothing can be gained from further investigation or a public inquiry. But Jimmy Savile died in 2011 and the police investigation into his crimes began in 2012.

One of the reasons for requesting a public inquiry is to examine the responses of statutory agencies, including the police, rather than accepting those responses at face value. A public inquiry could discover not just what the police did, but as David Greenwood has pointed out, what they did not do. There are several areas of concern that have come to light so far regarding the police response to Kevin O'Connell, and two other victims have contacted the campaign to express concern about lack of Dyfed Powys Police action after reporting abuse and evidence of abuse.

The police delayed acting in connection with the abuse reported by Kevin O'Connell, and only began an investigation when Ben Lake MP, at the request of Kevin O'Connell, queried their delay.

One officer, whilst taking a statement from Kevin O'Connell, was verbally dismissive of the impact of the abuse, saying, "It was only a bit of touching." This has unfortunately is part of a pattern of not taking either Kevin O'Connell or his experiences seriously. Kevin has been badly let down by them. His emails have gone unanswered. His questions have been ignored, his disabilities and post-traumatic stress disregarded.

Police enquiries into the abuse reported by Kevin O'Connell were so delayed that the second perpetrator that Kevin named, [REDACTED], died a year after Kevin's report to the police, without any contact having been made with [REDACTED] by Dyfed Powys Police. There appears to be a pattern here. Another victim reported their abuse to the Isle of Wight force, who sent the report on to Dyfed Powys. They then failed to make contact with the victim.ⁱ Yet another victim contacted Dyfed-Powys Police with evidence after the S4C documentary about Kevin's return to Caldey Island was broadcast in May 2019, and to this date has heard nothing back from them.ⁱⁱ

Kevin, and other victims, have lost faith in Dyfed-Powys Police and do not feel confident in their ability to appropriately investigate, or their commitment to investigate, historic child sexual abuse on Caldey Island.

The Deputy Minister tasks the victims with a significant challenge which they may not be able to meet. This is to discover what did not happen in terms of a police response, which is undocumented, rather than what did happen which is a documented matter. This is also true of the other agencies that may, or may not, have been involved in reports of abuse on Caldey Island.

2. The relationship between Caldey Abbey, IICSA, and the Catholic Church

One point that I raised in my previous statement to the Petitions Committee has not been addressed in the Deputy Minister's response. In my opinion this point is crucial to understanding the need for an inquiry. It relates to the extraordinary position of Caldey Abbey in relation to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church have in recent years improved their safeguarding procedures and practice, and hopefully will further improve safeguarding as a result of IICSA's recommendations. However, the Catholic Church does not in fact have jurisdiction over Caldey Abbey. It therefore cannot ensure effective safeguarding on the island.

In May 2019 ITV Wales reported that the Catholic Diocese of Menevia stated that although they had been advising the Abbey on their safeguarding policies and practices for the last 18 months, Caldey was not their responsibility. Further, despite assurances from the Abbey that they are complying with the 2018 review of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, the then Bishop of Menevia commented in 2019 that 'the Abbey has insisted on retaining its oversight of any specific cases, past, present, or in the future.'ⁱⁱⁱ

Caldey Abbey is not part of the existing structures of the Catholic Church. It is an Abbey of the Trappist Cistercian Order, under the Belgian Cistercian jurisdiction of Scourmont (*Abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont, Chimay, Belgium*). The Abbey has no direct accountability to the Catholic Church and Diocese of Menevia and is under no obligation to follow recommendations from IICSA to the Catholic Church.

Neither do the Church of England, or the Church in Wales, have jurisdiction over Caldey Abbey, and the Deputy Minister's remarks on IICSA findings in regard to the Church of England and Church in Wales, lessons learnt and recommendations to improve child protection and safeguarding in Wales with the Welsh Interfaith Council, do not have relevance in the context of Caldey Island unless Welsh Government have the powers to enforce the Abbey's future compliance with those recommendations.

There is a hole in the net of the Abbey's accountability that goes beyond the reach of the institutions and remedies suggested by the Deputy Minister.

3. Closure, and the scope of what needs to be discovered.

Regarding the Deputy Minister's comment that she understands that 'victims want closure and they think a public inquiry would provide this'. Vaughan Gething MS has said, in the context of the UK Infected Blood Inquiry, that an inquiry was necessary, because:

"We do need to understand what went wrong in the past because without that there'll be no sense of closure for people who have absolutely been let down".^{iv}

Kevin O'Connell and the other victims desperately need closure, but it is not feasible for them to find closure by the means that the Deputy Minister suggests, ie via police complaints procedures. This is not just because their trust in the police has broken down.

It is also that the range of what needs to be uncovered regarding the perpetration of abuse at Caldey is immense: in terms of the duration of time; the potential number of victims; the possible number of perpetrators; the knowledge or lack of it and response or lack of it from the police and other statutory authorities; the reaction of the Abbey itself; what evidence there is or not within the Abbey's records; whether the police attempted to seek out any evidence within those records, did they visit the island, did they attempt to find any other victims.

It is simply not possible for traumatised victims, lay persons, to find out all of this. It is surely the duty of the Welsh Government to enable this so that everyone, not just the victims, understand how it happened that so many children were not protected from this abuse, and were let down by an overwhelming failure of all the agencies and bodies concerned.

My final point is that Caldey Island is a private owned island off the West Wales coast, that has housed and shielded monks who sexually abused children, housed and shielded convicted paedophiles, and seem to be unaccountable to the law. Children still visit the island. The Abbey is still acting outside of any jurisdiction requiring those children to be made safe.

ⁱ Victim can be contacted

ⁱⁱ Victim can be contacted

ⁱⁱⁱ <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/>

^{iv} <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-49045953>

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

23 November 2020

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

Please reply to:

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Llandaff
Cardiff
CF5 2DT

Dear Sirs

**Our client: Kevin O'Connell
Caldey Island**

We have had sight of the Deputy Minister's letter of the 5th November last to the committee. The Deputy Ministers letter puts emphasis on the fact that the police state;

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

This logic is fundamentally flawed for two reasons;

- the test of proof in criminal law is a very high one and the criminal process is adversarial. This is entirely different to the test of evidence and purpose of an inquiry which is, of course, inquisitorial
- As stated on a number of occasions to the Welsh Government – but constantly ignored – the police are perceived as potentially part of the problem and a key element of any inquiry.

The Deputy Minister's other principal reason for denying an inquiry is equally flawed in logic. The Deputy Minister now acknowledges that she was wrong – as a matter of fact – in her previous letter to the committee, and that the IICSA inquiry will not deal with Caldey. The minister goes on to say that the IICSA inquiry essentially answers issues that a Caldey Inquiry would raise. This is, with respect, a tautological argument that cannot stand

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scrutiny. Previously the minister argued (wrongly, as now accepted) that there should be no Caldey inquiry as IICSA were bound to consider Caldey. IICSA though declined to consider Caldey, yet the Minister now relies of the potential IICSA outcome as a reason for not having an inquiry in respect of Caldey. As put forward in my previous correspondence, the fact that the IICSA have treated Caldey as a separate, bespoke, issue should fortify the reason for a separate bespoke Caldey inquiry.

With every submission the Welsh Governments position becomes more untenable and its reasoning exposed as fundamentally flawed.

Our clients are very disappointed that the Welsh Governments two formal responses to the committee have been shown to be, firstly, inaccurate and subsequently illogical. This only furthers strength and relevance of the victims call for a full independent inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Watkins and Gunn

Watkins and Gunn

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Direct Fax: [REDACTED]

Agenda Item 3.2

P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

This petition was submitted by Archie's Allergies having collected a total of 172 signatures.

Text of Petition

There is currently no law in place anywhere in the UK that offers education on food allergies in schools from primary age and up.

We want to change that! Offering educational sessions in schools will benefit children at risk of anaphylaxis. It will help others to understand food allergies, a medical condition that unless you know someone with this disease you wouldn't be aware of the side effects it carries.

We hope introducing educational sessions on food allergies will also break the stigma around them, eliminate bullying and offer more support to children living with this disease.

All it takes it one touch or one bite and without administering an epi pen you could be faced with a very tragic situation.

Introducing mandatory epi pen training will also eliminate the worry for families living with food allergies. Teachers and school staff will know the vital signs of an allergic reaction meaning anaphylaxis can be spotted sooner.

Archie's Allergies is a new charity offering support, advice and information on the importance of being allergy aware.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-932
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07839/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

4 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 12 October regarding Petition P-05-932 'Education on food allergies in schools & mandatory epi-pen training'.

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer held an initial meeting in February this year with officials and clinicians specialising in allergies and immunology. The meeting sought to gain a greater understanding of allergy and immunology services across Wales; the issues and challenges health boards are facing; and what could be done centrally to support both allergy and anaphylaxis sufferers and services at a National level.

Unfortunately, this work has been postponed along with a number of other planned reviews to allow all available resources to be focused on supporting the Welsh Government response to Covid-19.

We remain in a worldwide pandemic and are moving into winter, a time when health services face enormous pressure generally. We need to be realistic about what can and cannot be achieved in these difficult times. The pandemic has consumed healthcare policy and as a result allergy and immunology care has been impacted along with many other aspects of central service provision.

However, please be assured that the Welsh Government remains committed to delivering the best possible care to the people of Wales suffering with allergies and anaphylaxis and will resume this work as soon as circumstances allow.

Yours sincerely,

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

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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.

Back Page 152
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.

Ein Cyf /Our Ref:
Dyddiad /Date:
Gofynnwch am/Please ask for:
Llinell uniongyrchol/Direct line:
Ebost/Email:

WLGA/ P-05-932 /201102
2nd November 2020
Sharon Davies
029 2046 8610
sharon.davies@wlga.gov.uk



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

Annwyl/Dear Janet,

Petition P-05-932 Education on Food Allergies in Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) welcomes this opportunity to inform the Petitions Committee of our work on special diets in schools and provide a response to the above petition. This response was prepared by the WLGA's National Food in Schools Coordinator (*'National Coordinator'*) and National Dietitian for Special Diets in Schools (*'National Dietitian'*) and approved by the WLGA's Education Spokesperson.

Information about the WLGA's work in relation to special diets in schools

The role of the *National Coordinator* is to support and advise local authorities and maintained schools in relation to food in schools, with a focus on healthy eating. In Wales, 99% of primary schools and 72% of secondary schools have their catering service organised by their local authority. The remaining schools organise their own catering arrangements through contract caterers or by employing catering staff directly. In recent years, there has been growing demand to support local authorities with managing special diets in schools. This appears to be a consequence of increasing demand and expectations by parents and pupils, and the introduction of progressively stringent allergen legislation.

A special diet can be described as a food provision, based on a requirement, that cannot be freely selected from the main options available. Within schools these include medically prescribed diets (e.g. allergies, intolerances, type 1 diabetes, coeliac disease), additional dining needs (e.g. modified texture, modified dining environment, limited food range) and religious, cultural, vegetarian and vegan.

In January 2018, the *National Coordinator* established Regional Working Groups for Special Diets, including representatives from catering services, local health board dietetic services, local authority education services, the

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Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.

Ni fydd defnyddio'r naill iaith na'r llall yn arwain at oedi.

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Association for Public Service Excellence Wales, Coeliac UK, Diabetes UK, LACA Wales, the National Autism Team and the Welsh Government. The aims of these groups are as follows:

1. Develop nationally agreed guidance for managing special diets in maintained schools in Wales and encourage stakeholders to 'sign up'.
2. Quantify the demand, provision and financial implications of special diets in maintained schools in Wales.
3. Highlight and share good practice with a wide range of stakeholders within Wales and the UK.
4. Recruit a *National Dietitian* to support stakeholders and focus on progressing the work of the regional working groups.

The fourth aim was achieved in December 2019, with a two-year project plan approved by a National Project Board. In the first year, the plan was to trial and refine the WLGA's draft guidance for managing special diets in relation to school meals, and pilot a data collection process across Wales. As of 28 February 2020, 27 schools from 13 local authorities had expressed an interest in taking part in the school trials. In the second year, the plan was to roll-out the guidance and develop special diet menus, recipes and training for school catering services. Pending further funding for years three and four, the plan is to review, develop and sign-post schools to special diets guidance and training across the whole school day. Throughout the project the *National Dietitian* will continue to chair regional working groups, liaise with a wide range of stakeholders and input to relevant reviews of legislation and guidance.

Progress of the project has been significantly hampered by COVID-19. Following the suspension of statutory education in March 2020, the WLGA supported the secondment of the *National Dietitian* back to the NHS between April and September. It is optimistically anticipated that the first year's plans can resume in 2021 and preparations are underway. However, plans will remain flexible depending on circumstances and demands.

For further context, the principles of the WLGA's special diets work are outlined below, with a rationale for their importance from the perspective of regional working group members:

- 1. Procedures should be school-led and guidance should cover the whole school day, from breakfast to 6pm** - There are inconsistencies in managing mild allergies, intolerances, coeliac disease, religious, cultural, vegetarian and vegan requirements across the school day and across Wales. Schools often direct parents to contact their catering service, rather than collecting and sharing information at school-level. A school-led approach, with special food requirements identified during school enrolment and information shared with the catering service, would enable special food provisions to be offered across the whole school day.
- 2. Schools and catering services are expected to make reasonable arrangements to offer special food provisions and develop flexible policies and practices for responding to requests** - There is limited national guidance for managing special diets in maintained schools in the UK.
- 3. Pupils with special food requirements should be offered a provision equivalent to that of other pupils** - They will usually have the same nutritional requirements.

Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.

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4. **Special food provisions (excluding medically prescribed diets) should be provided for within an overall provision that complies with [The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#) ('Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations')** - Additional dining needs are not currently captured under the definition of medically prescribed diets.

With regards to the second principle, it is important to note that LACA (England) have also established a working group to develop "nationally agreed policies for the management of allergens in education catering". The *National Coordinator* supported this group during its conception in May 2019 and provided information about the WLGA's special diets work. The *National Dietitian* is keen to continue sharing good practice and plans to trial LACA's 'risk assessment tool' alongside the WLGA's guidance.

The remainder of this letter responds to the main themes of the petition, with reference to the WLGA's special diets work.

Education on food allergies for pupils

Previous responders have highlighted the legal duties placed on local authorities and governing bodies in relation to providing appropriate education. The WLGA supports the principles of the New Curriculum for Wales and the opportunities this brings for head teachers and their governing bodies. Where schools have pupils with severe food allergies, food intolerances, coeliac disease or type 1 diabetes, it would be good practice for them to provide education on these supported by their local authority and partner agencies. Pending further funding for years three and four of the special diets project, the *National Dietitian* plans to review, develop and sign-post schools to, educational resources on food allergens, as part a whole-school approach to managing special diets.

Mandatory adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) training

Previous responders have highlighted the legal duties placed on local authorities and governing bodies to plan for, and respond to, emergency situations and provide appropriate training. The WLGA understands the rationale behind Allergy UK's campaign to make AAIs mandatory in all maintained schools and agree that additional funding would be required for the purchase of AAIs and comprehensive staff training.

In terms of managing special diets in schools, the WLGA's draft 'procedures' comprise eight steps, ranging from the essential 'enrolling' step to the undesirable and avoidable 'reacting' step. To date, regional working group discussions around AAIs have highlighted that some schools expect local authority catering staff to be trained and responsible for administering AAIs during the provision of free breakfast in primary schools. Local authority catering services do not consider this to be appropriate or reasonable. The [Free breakfast in primary schools: Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies](#) states that "headteachers are responsible for the internal organisation, day-to-day management and control of the school and this applies to the breakfast session." The WLGA's draft 'roles and responsibilities' recommend that a 'named member of school personnel' is responsible for organising training and ensuring appropriate action is taken in case of an emergency across the whole school day.

Education on food allergies for school staff

This petition has provided the *National Dietitian* with valuable information to further develop the 'planning' and 'providing' steps in relation to special diets training. This may involve enhancing the role of the 'named member of school personnel' to support fellow school personnel with managing all special diets across the whole school day. This role would be similar to the 'allergy champion' suggested by the petitioner. In the second year of the special diets project the *National Dietitian* plans to develop special diets training for catering services. Pending further funding, this will be extended to other school personnel in the third and fourth years.

Whole-school approach to allergen management

Previous responders have highlighted the legal duties placed on local authorities, governing bodies and catering services. The Minister for Education's initial response to this petition explained that "[her] officials attend regular meetings with school caterers, local authorities and dietitians, where issues around food allergies are discussed in depth" and "[Welsh Government] are also changing the *Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations* and revising the [\[Healthy Eating in Schools\] Statutory Guidance](#) for schools". The *National Coordinator* and *National Dietitian* organise and chair these meetings and will continue working closely with Welsh Government officials to proceed changes and revisions, particularly with regards to the management of special diets in schools, informed by the special diets project.

It is anticipated that the Welsh Government's [Supporting learners with healthcare needs guidance](#) (*Healthcare Needs Guidance*) will also be updated, following the additional learning needs reforms, informed by the special diets project. Most of this guidance, in relation to school responsibilities for making support arrangements and gathering and sharing information with stakeholders, is robust and in line with the draft 'procedures' and 'roles and responsibilities'. The WLGA are of the view that the *Healthcare Needs Guidance* could be positively updated with: more detail and rigour in relation its suggested complaints procedure; greater precision around the provision of allergen and nutritional information to parents and pupils; and clearer distinctions between the statutory guidance and non-statutory advice. Some members of the regional working groups have also expressed dissatisfaction about the decision-making process for Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs), suggesting that the final decision on their requirement should be with the registered healthcare professional providing care to the pupil, rather than the head teacher.

Building on Public Health Wales' reference to the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS), there is an opportunity for the *National Coordinator* and *National Dietitian* to inform the impending review of the National Quality Award indicators in relation to Food and Fitness and Hygiene and Safety. The *National Coordinator* already has close links with WNHSS colleagues in relation to a whole-school approach to healthy eating in schools and will liaise with PHW about this alongside the *National Dietitian*.

The WLGA agree with the views of Allergen UK, that "most schools take their responsibility for children's health extremely seriously", "individual healthcare plans are used in many schools" and "the steps forward we have made over recent years in legislation and statutory guidance still need to go further to ensure all children living with allergy are safe in school". The *National Dietitian* is keen to liaise with Allergen UK further, to find out more about their 'gold standard' model policy for the management of allergies in schools and the 'School Allergy Action Group' programme in secondary schools.

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In response to some specific points raised by the petitioner, the WLGA expects schools to be inclusive during educational and recreational activities and involve appropriate healthcare professionals and parents in the preparation of IHPs. If this is not happening, the petitioner and other parents/carers in the same situation, could request a copy of the school's healthcare needs policy and follow the complaints procedure that should be detailed within the policy.

A school-led, whole-school approach is essential to the WLGA's special diets work, the Welsh Government's *Healthcare Needs Guidance*, the WNHSS and Allergen UK's 'School Allergy Action Group' programme.

Monitoring implementation of healthcare needs policies and good practice

This theme of the petition is fundamental to the bigger question of whether healthcare needs policies are implemented consistently across the whole school day and across Wales. To help answer this, it is necessary to explore who is responsible for ensuring effective implementation and how this is monitored.

The *Healthcare Needs Guidance* states that "governing bodies must ensure plans, arrangements and procedures to support learners with healthcare needs are in place and are properly and effectively implemented". One of the governing bodies' responsibilities is "ensuring arrangements are in place for the development, monitoring and review of the healthcare needs arrangements." The headteacher also has responsibilities in this regard, but it is unclear whether these are statutory or non-statutory given that the *Healthcare Needs Guidance* is only issued as statutory guidance to governing bodies and local authorities. Headteacher responsibilities include "ensuring the arrangements in place to meet a learner's healthcare needs are fully understood by all parties involved and acted upon, and such actions maintained" and "providing annual reports to the governing body on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the healthcare needs of learners". Local authorities' responsibilities are primarily concerned with "ensur[ing] education provision is available to learners" and "should provide support, advice and guidance, including how to meet the training needs of education setting staff." For clarity, it is worth noting that local authorities are not responsible for monitoring effective implementation of the *Healthcare Needs Guidance* within their education settings.

Estyn's role in monitoring the implementation of schools' healthcare needs policies primarily relates to the "safeguarding" aspect of the "care, support and guidance" area of the common inspection framework. Estyn's [Supplementary guidance: inspecting safeguarding in schools and PRUs](#) provides information on the *Healthcare Needs Guidance* and highlights that safeguarding encompasses a range of issues, including "arrangements for meeting the needs of children with medical conditions", "pupil health and safety and wellbeing" and "safe recruitment, supervision, training and management of staff". Although special diets are not referenced explicitly, inspectors have a point of reference should a healthcare concern or question arise during an inspection.

The WLGA supports the assurances given by the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) and the anecdotal feedback highlighted by Allergen UK, in relation to policy implementation. We have discussed this matter with members of the regional working groups and undertaken a review of LA- and school-level healthcare needs policies during summer 2019. Catering managers were generally aware of their local authority's healthcare needs policy and some had contributed to its development in relation to special diets. Representatives from Coeliac UK and

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Diabetes UK echoed the views of Allergen UK, acknowledging that their organisations are often contacted by parents when they encounter issues, rather than to praise some of the good practice that is going on in schools. The review of healthcare needs policies found that each local authority had a policy in place, in the form of guidance or a model policy. School policies were generally in line with their local authority's policy but were less likely to be published online. Where these policies were available, over 95% referenced the term "dietary" and over 85% referenced "allergies". This review suggests that there is inconsistency in implementation, in relation to the (albeit not critical) requirement to publish policies online, and some policies could offer more information in relation to dietary requirements and allergies. When the *National Dietitian* starts working with pilot local authorities and schools, she will be able to further consider the appropriateness of policies, in terms of special diets, and how effective schools are at implementing these.

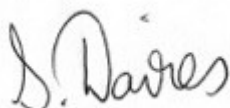
It is acknowledged that the above review may have taken place before the Minister for Education "wrote to all maintained schools to reiterate the requirement to read the statutory guidance and implement a healthcare needs policy at the earliest opportunity". However, the *National Dietitian* intends to offer support to local authorities' governor services and Estyn in relation to managing special diets, with a view to developing training resources and effective practice case studies, respectively.

Final comments

It is important to note, and illustrated by the petitioner's lived experiences with regards to allergen management in their child's school, that the WLGA's work on special diets will not automatically create a robust, accountable and scrutinised process for managing all special diets in schools in Wales. Complementary updates to the *Healthy Eating in Schools Statutory Guidance* and *Healthcare Needs Guidance* will help. Further engagement from local authorities' education services, beyond catering services, and continued engagement from partners will also be required to further develop, introduce, implement and monitor compliance with nationally agreed guidance consistently.

The *National Coordinator* and *National Dietitian* are sensitive to this petition, and other petitions that have been addressed by the Petitions Committee in relation to food in schools, and would welcome further correspondence with the petitioner, the Petitions Committee and fellow responders. The *National Dietitian* would also be interested in engaging with the Welsh Government's in relation to reviewing their approach to allergies and immunology.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Sharon Davies
Pennaeth Addysg
Head of Education

Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the same language.
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P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.11.20

Firstly, thank you to all that have responded so far regarding our petition. I would like to highlight the recent response from Sharon Davies, how thorough and detailed it was, please know how much I appreciate the time taken to reply in full. I also appreciate every policy in place currently and to the schools that turn to these policies to keep children living with food allergies safe but as well as in every reply I have sent back to the Senedd I highlight that regardless of these policies and complaints procedures no one cares because they don't have to by law, it just falls on if that person can be bothered to take the time to learn and understand allergies especially when they aren't just as straightforward as banning nuts from a classroom and we know this is not an ideal situation there are currently, officially 14 top allergens and we can't always avoid these allergens however if we are educated on how dangerous these allergens are to those allergic what a different world we would live in.

School is where we go to learn so why aren't we learning about how we can look after our friends by not sharing our food even though it's good to be kind but it isn't safe to share our foods with our friends. Why aren't teachers more understanding of our children's life threatening conditions, they don't have to because not one person is checking on them to see if they know what they are doing or if they need more support.

Many schools across Cardiff had epi pen training cancelled due to covid this year so instead were sent a video and that's it, a video but Cardiff Council isn't chasing anyone to check if the staff have watched the video, have they been able to practise with a training pen? Have they been given the opportunity to ask questions about the different ways anaphylaxis can present, no they haven't and I must stress this is not good enough, this same practise that isn't evolving in anyway so how are we as parents meant to trust the level of care our teachers are giving our children if there is no one monitoring this? I can say 'yes I watched the video' but how do you know if I did or not? You don't!

I really support the answers from Sharon and I hope that you can too. She proves more can be done and it's time more is done. Food Allergies come with an abundance of anxiety in a variety of ways and if we can remove the anxiousness parents have when leaving their children in a school setting as well as reassurance for the child knowing that if there was an emergency the school is fully prepared then we are moving in the right direction, if we don't address the issues I have raised and proved time and time again that there needs to be accountability then what becomes of our children that live with food allergies?

I still don't trust my own child's school. I dread every morning I leave him and pray he has a safe day because everytime my phone rings and it's his school I hope there isn't a disaster on the other end because I have no confidence in any of them to save my son's life. That's what it comes down to, SAVING A LIFE.

In response to Vaughan Gething, I have emailed many times and the response to the Senedd is the first regarding support with the petition, unfortunately this reply is very disappointing and poor. Food allergies didn't go away whilst covid came, they were here before the pandemic, during and after they aren't something you can hide in the cupboard when you feel like it. Again it's unfortunate that this response shows no understanding of what I am lobbying for, support services lack for those with allergies regardless and you'd need to create new allergy nurse positions to help aid the lack in service, allergy nurses store incredible knowledge and bare the brunt of all allergy support that families require. But

these services have no bearing on making epi pen training mandatory in schools or on how the welsh government should be aiding schools in support those living with allergic disease.

Imagine the welsh government does nothing just as England has and another child dies in school because of the lack of knowledge or the fact that no one is monitoring the current policies and their standards. Our children, my child, shouldn't have to wait for tragedy to strike again but instead be proud that their country, their government has chosen to better our procedures and training in place to PREVENT tragedy. These are both 2 very different and very important things you as our government need to consider because on your head be it.

As always thank you greatly again,

Charlotte

Agenda Item 3.3

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 JM/01579/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

5 November 2020

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders MS,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September regarding Petition P- 05-985 - Provide key-worker childcare equivalent to what was available prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We welcome the opportunity to update the Petitions Committee on our plans for the provision of education and childcare including that of key or critical workers in the event of any future lockdowns. We were also interested to hear the petitioner's views on how local authorities should approach future school closures or lockdowns.

Please be assured that keeping schools and childcare settings open remains a key priority for the Welsh Government. This is vital for our young people's education, their overall wellbeing and for parents and carers to work or train.

The transmission rates within schools and childcare settings remains low. Evidence here and indeed worldwide shows that there is no significant relationship between schools reopening and Covid cases in the community. However, coronavirus rates are continuing to rise across Wales and as a Government we are continually reviewing the arrangements in place to manage both infection and transmission. This is critical to ensuring we go through the rest of the autumn and winter without overwhelming our NHS.

We will shortly publish the Coronavirus Control Plan for Education and Childcare Settings. It sets out our expectations for the operation of education and childcare settings at each of the stages in the wider Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales. It is intended to provide education and childcare settings with the information they need to plan for each stage of the response, and to put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure that they continue to meet their statutory duties and responsibilities.

The plan includes advice on the issues to take into account should we need to limit the numbers of children on site, and confirms that schools and childcare settings should look to prioritise the children of critical workers as well as vulnerable children and those who may

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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.

be digitally excluded. The plan also includes information and advice about the definition of vulnerable children and critical workers to help schools and settings with their forward planning. We are keen to reflect the outcome of the current firebreak within the plan and will publish it as soon as we have been able to do that, in partnership with stakeholders.

We hope this information shows the committee and the petitioner that the childcare needs of key/critical workers have been fully considered and taken account of in our plans for any future lockdown situations.

We would also like to update the committee on the current levels of childcare provision available across Wales. Of the 3,548 childcare settings registered with CIW in the week commencing 12th October 2020, 3,252 (92%) are currently thought to be open. Given that at one point during the initial lockdown around half of all registered childcare providers had closed as a consequence of the pandemic this is very welcoming. We are extremely proud of the way settings have stepped up to the challenge against a rapidly changing backdrop of advice and guidance, adapting their businesses and staffing arrangements to operate safely. As the petitioner says in their letter wrap around care is essential to enable parents to work and it is encouraging to see how schools and childcare settings have worked in partnerships often in challenging circumstances to ensure that parents and carers can access wrap around and out of school childcare at either end of the school day.

As has been said previously the local authorities have been integral to delivering our Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS). This Welsh Government grant paid via local authorities to registered childcare providers supported over 900 vulnerable children and 9,600 critical workers' children (based on the latest estimates from local authorities between April and August 2020).

An independent review of C-CAS is being undertaken as part of the third annual evaluation of the Childcare Offer. During the evaluation parents and childcare providers will be contacted and asked for their views on both schemes and their use of childcare. Information will also be gathered from local authorities regarding the administration of the scheme and its take-up. We are hoping to publish a full evaluation report early next year.

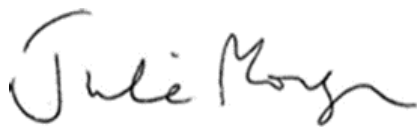
We are sorry that the petitioner was disappointed in the response by local authorities to summer holiday childcare provision. The £2.6m was split into two separate funds. £1.6m was directed via the Local Authority Emergency Hardship fund to enable local authorities to enhance the childcare and play opportunities for children and young people aged five to sixteen in their areas. The focus was predominately on those children and young people who needed additional support over the summer. Officials are gathering data on the outcome of the scheme and will report on this later in the year. A further £1m was allocated to fund provision for children and young people over the school summer holidays to help them to re-engage with education, giving them the opportunity to take part in activities which they might have missed out on whilst not at school such as socialising with their peers and physical activity. The funding was managed by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on our behalf and we are expecting a report on how funding was used shortly. Local authorities were given flexibility to use the funding to benefit those who need it most in their areas but, priority was given where it could be demonstrated that funding was targeted on those who have missed out most whilst they were not attending school and there was also a requirement for activity to focus on the needs of vulnerable children in deprived communities.

We know that the pandemic has had and continues to have a profound impact on all our lives. Welsh Government announced last week a £320 million financial package to help

support our priorities and in particular to help support those most adversely affected by the Covid -19 crisis. Of this funding package £3.8 million in revenue funding has been allocated to support the childcare and play sector both in terms of recovery from the impact of Covid-19 and ongoing sustainability. The funding will help ensure that children have access to quality childcare and play provision and that families are supported with their childcare needs, enabling parents to work. £5m in capital funding has also been allocated to help settings meet the costs of adaptations to ensure premises can operate in a Covid-secure manner and for additional investment in play facilities to support access to play opportunities for children adversely impacted by the pandemic.

We hope the information we have provided has been helpful for both the committee and petitioner.

Yours sincerely,

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 3.4

P-05-1011 Virtual On-line teacher-led lessons to be provided for all school children

This petition was submitted by Elfed Williams having collected a total of 2,772 signatures.

Text of Petition:

There is a strong possibility that social distancing will remain in place beyond September when the new school year starts. Schools will struggle to accommodate all children returning to school. We are calling on the Welsh Government to work with Local Authorities and Teachers Unions to find a National solution for all children to receive the education they need to progress their education. This will require a combination of school and home-based learning through virtual classrooms.

Additional Information

If social distancing has to be maintained beyond September the Welsh Government (WG) needs to start developing a national strategy to educate our children and to provide support for children that might need shielding. As is likely that only 1/3 of children can be in school at any one time, therefore, a combination of lessons provided in school with virtual on-line lessons will be needed supported by Learning Management Systems.

shorturl.at/boB24

Teachers, schools and Local Authorities will need support and funding in overcoming, setup cost for learning platforms, safeguarding issues but also in delivering of lessons online which might require different skill sets by teachers.

It is not good enough for the WG to wash its hands of this issue. Countries like Singapore, China are embracing these technologies due to Covid restrictions on schools. Wales needs to be on the vanguard, leading the way to ensure our children receive the best education during these difficult times.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd West
- North Wales

Agenda Item 3.5

P-05-1015 Categorise schools as critical infrastructure

This petition was submitted by Christopher Hughes having collected a total of 484 signatures.

Text of Petition:

With test, track and trace in place and community transmission across Wales extremely low nationwide, school closures should not happen again in Wales.

This is essential for children's mental wellbeing, their education, and any safeguarding issues.

Additional Information

Should any schools be required to close due to a severe outbreak of C19 they must immediately be able to deliver all lessons live and online by way of an education contingency plan. Furthermore they also need to ensure that all children are present in registration and lessons, with any absences followed up in the same as they would in school ensuring children's safeguarding and continuation of education.

*This method of education must only continue for as shortest time as possible before all children must then re attend school as normal.

Schools specifically for children with SEN including disabled children should not close and should have a contingency to continue to remain open even throughout localised lockdowns.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd West
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1011 & P-05-1015
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05834/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Petitions@Senedd.Wales

5 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter and the additional queries that you have been raised following your committee meeting. Please let me reassure you that I agree completely that school is vital for the wellbeing and futures of our children. I also agree that it is an important factor in allowing families to work and keeping the economy going. These are, in fact, why the Government has made the decision to ensure that the majority of school year groups remain open during the forthcoming 'fire break'.

Re: The importance of each child continuing to receive their education via online, interactive teaching if they have to self-isolate or face further lockdown

I understand the concerns that have been raised by parents and learners on this issue. I have been clear that children and young people should have access to learning while isolating. We published our learning guidance in July, which emphasised the need to promote learning in all operational scenarios, including a focus on blended learning.

The decisions on how schools approach blended learning, such as 'live' or asynchronous, are made at school level. We expect schools, as part of their risk assessment for the autumn term, to develop a plan which sets out how, what and when they will deliver if normal teaching and operations are disrupted, such as cohorts requiring to self-isolate. Specifically this should include:

- a. Delivery of high quality teaching and assessment approaches to promote progression from the beginning of the autumn term;
- b. Achievement of blended learning pedagogical approaches which are relevant in all scenarios to improve the teaching offer; and
- c. Implementation of flexible pedagogical approaches to ensure that learners do not miss out if they are away from school for a period.

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.

Our [Stay Safe. Stay Learning](#) policy sets out how the education system in Wales should support distance learning, mitigating the impact on many of our learners of not being physically present in schools and ensuring continuity of learning. Wales is well placed to support schools, practitioners and learners with online distance learning, as we have our national digital platform, Hwb. Additionally, we have supported local authorities and schools across Wales in mobilising support for digitally excluded learners. We have also issued clear guidance to schools and local authorities on delivering distance learning and also on the use of pre-recorded and live streaming of lessons.

A dedicated area on Hwb is available <https://hwb.gov.wales/distance-learning/> that contains all the information relevant to distance learning. Guidance has been produced by Estyn and our regional consortia in regard to blended learning, with a range of support to schools being made available.

We are currently producing resources to support the development of practitioners' skills in learning design to support better asynchronous learning opportunities moving forward (that is, better blended and online learning opportunities). We know that teacher demand for training and support to undertake blended learning has been significant and we welcome schools' commitment to ensure learners continue to progress.

Re: The negative impact being out of school has had on many children, in particular those with additional learning needs

I recognise that the uncertainties arising from the coronavirus pandemic are particularly challenging for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN), their families and those who support and care for them. I am committed to doing everything possible to support these learners, parents and carers during this difficult time.

Given the challenges all learners have faced over recent months, and acknowledging that this impact has been significant, I have published supplementary [guidance](#) for the autumn term, which is dedicated to the practical, emotional and learning needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including those with ALN. This guidance was published along with [operational guidance](#) for schools and guidance for [learning in schools](#).

The Operational Guidance sets out that, although it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment in educational settings, the risks associated with the pandemic have to be carefully balanced with the negative health impacts of learners not being in school. Being out of school can be detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development and their health and wellbeing, which may have an impact both in the short and longer term.

Each school has been required to carry out a full risk assessment and implement sensible and proportionate controls to reduce the risks to all from COVID-19. Schools should ensure that any measures they put in place do not negatively impact the wellbeing of learners.

There have been no modifications to the statutory duties of local authorities in respect of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Wales is the only country in the UK not to have modified these duties as a result of the current pandemic. The duties of local authorities arising from the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (Wales) 2002 remain in force, and the SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002 still applies. The Code focuses on removing barriers to participation and learning. It provides practical advice to local authorities, maintained schools, early years' settings and others on carrying out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for learners' SEN.

We know most learning will have been impacted in some form over recent months, with more significant impacts expected in vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. I have therefore announced an additional £29m to 'recruit, recover and raise standards', bringing teachers into schools and settings to provide in-depth, focused support for those who have specific challenges to enable them to achieve their potential. 600 extra teachers and 300 teaching assistants will be recruited throughout the school year, targeting extra support at Years 11, 12 and 13, as well as disadvantaged and vulnerable learners of all ages.

Local authorities, schools and education settings should prioritise preparation for potential further national or local lockdowns to seek to ensure as little disruption as possible to the learning of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. As part of this planning, local authorities need to consider how best to deploy resources, creatively and flexibly to meet the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, and their families. Any such response will need to be based on appropriate public health advice.

In the event of a further national or local lockdown, consideration will be given to issuing detailed guidance relating to undertaking risk assessment to support SEN learners. Work on this suite of measures was well advanced ahead of the decision to return to full operation of settings in September, with detailed engagement having taken place with a range of partners, including local authorities. As a consequence, we would expect to be in a position to move swiftly to implement a new set of arrangements were the need to arise.

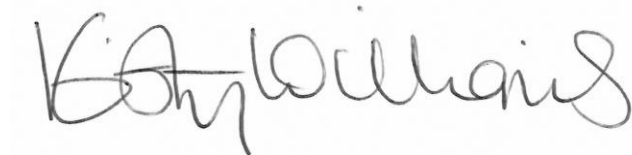
The views of learners, where practicable, and their parents/carers should be considered when making decisions that affect them. The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring the rights of children and persons with disabilities and consulting with them helps give real effect to children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in particular to the right in Article 12 for those who are capable to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them.

Re: How many pupils in Wales do not have access to the Internet for the purposes of accessing online teaching at home, according to Government data?

We do not currently have access to accurate data concerning how many pupils in Wales do not have access to the Internet for the purposes of accessing online teaching at home. However, to support digitally excluded learners in maintained schools during the pandemic, we have allocated 10,848 MiFi devices and 9,717 software licences to local authorities for distribution to digitally excluded learners. Based on local authority

feedback, through their own arrangements or via our nationally provided support, we understand that provision for digitally excluded learners is now in place. If a parent or carer hasn't accessed this provision, they need to contact their local school for provision to be made. Further information can be found here - <https://gov.wales/device-and-connectivity-update-digitally-excluded-learners-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

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

Agenda Item 3.6

P-05-1028 Relax the excessive restrictions to allow motor sport rallies to take place in Wales

This petition was submitted by Jamie Edwards having collected a total of 3,889 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Car rallies taking place in Wales bring around £15 million into the Welsh economy each year. The impact of COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed on events has decimated the rally community in Wales – affecting jobs, businesses, careers and also having a major impact on rural communities across Wales who benefit from rally 'tourism'. The current restrictions mean it is impossible for organisers to plan ahead into 2021 – meaning many more events, businesses and jobs could be lost permanently.

Additional Information:

Rallying has reacted to the COVID-19 impact and a trial event was held successfully in Cumbria in August. This involved competitors travelling from across the UK to attend an event in a private forest. The event was non-spectator, and strict social distancing guidelines were followed.

Pre-event administration was all completed electronically. There was zero physical interaction between course officials, marshals or timing teams and competitors through the use of digital technology.

There have been no reported cases of COVID-19 since the event ran, and the local area (Penrith) was boosted by hotel rooms being sold and restaurant tables booked.

Rallying in Wales is held in remote, rural parts of the communities, i.e. Dolgellau, Pembrey, Welshpool, Conwy, Neath Valley, Builth Wells. Social distancing can be followed, and events can be run to be as COVID-19 compliant as possible.

Currently, it is impossible to organise a motor rally in Wales due to the restrictions imposed.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Wrexham
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1028
Ein cyf/Our ref DET-03038-20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

16 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-05-1028: and the recommencement of Motorsport events in Wales. I note the comments enclosed from the original petitioner.

In response, and further to my previous correspondence on this matter of 23 September, a Motorsport Test Event was held at Trac Môn/Anglesey Circuit. This was undertaken in the expectation that the lessons learned from this, and a wider series of Test Events, would help us plan for the eventual safe return of such events to Wales. Unfortunately, due to the current public health position, the next phase of Test Events has had to be put on hold – this is also the case across the UK. We do not expect test events to resume until February 2021 but we will keep this under review.

The situation in relation to hosting sporting events such as rallying in Wales has not altered significantly since our last exchange. However, I can confirm that my officials maintain regular dialogue with UK Motorsport on the issues facing the sector. In addition, a stakeholder group consisting of organisations from the world of sport, arts and other events have been brought together, and will continue to advise on how we can safely and cautiously bring back spectators to events – but **only** when it is safe to do so. We are not yet able to put a date to this, however we continue to monitor the science and trends.

I note the statements the Petitioner makes in terms of additional safety measures that rallying has introduced in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and we will continue to work with the industry to consider how best we might develop a phased re-opening approach taking account of the public health position. In respect of the comments regarding live-streaming of Wrexham AFC matches at 'The Turf' pub – this would be subject to the rules in licenced venues and observance to social distancing as enforced by the Local Authority and my officials will raise this separately with Wrexham County Borough Council.

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.

Following the end of the Firebreak in Wales on 9 November, a number of new regulations come into force and FAQ guidance is available at: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance#section-46351>. In respect of the rules around events however, these have not changed and a maximum of 30 people outdoors or 15 people indoors can gather, if this is part of an organised activity managed for example by a gym, a leisure centre or a sports club. Children aged under 11 and those organising the activity (such as coaches) are not included in these numbers, but the organisers will need to take **all reasonable measures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus**.

I hope this goes some way to reassuring the Petitioner as to the level of appreciation within the group of the difficulties currently facing their particular sector. I appreciate that this is an extremely difficult time for all members of the event sector, including motorsports. But the virus has not gone away and we must continue to adhere to measures that are designed to help us keep Wales safe.

Yours sincerely,

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

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

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

P-05-1028 Relax the excessive restrictions to allow motor sport rallies to take place in Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.11.20

Thank you for the opportunity to hear our views again.

Since the original petition – not much has changed. We have not been able to mobilise any motorsport events or further test events in Wales since a sprint event in Anglesey – and there still remains little if any sign of the certainty needed to kick start motorsport in Wales again for 2021.

I fully recognise the challenges that COVID presents and the peaks in demand that have been experienced recently – but it is disappointing to read that further test events cannot be considered until at least February 2021.

There's nothing to suggest that a small scale test event promises to be a higher risk than is acceptable. A proposal is in place for a small scale rally test event on private forestry land – ideally in December. Creatively, the event is split into two fields of 15 cars, with 30 cars in total. Therefore, this limits the number to 30 for each competitive run of the rally stage. With ample social distancing and strict social distancing controls in place to virtually eradicate person to person contact on the day – we hope that Welsh Government would look at something like this realistically and in a pragmatic method. The event is being organised and run with the co-operation of a team of people experienced in running and delivering Wales Rally GB previously.

I don't think there is much else we can add at this stage given the circumstances and current stance of Welsh Government. I think any opportunity to discuss how we can trial a test event to help try and support the motorsport economy in Wales would be strongly welcomed.

Thanks,

Agenda Item 3.7

P-05-937 STOP BOILING CRUSTACEANS ALIVE (lobsters, crabs, crayfish, prawns etc)

This petition was submitted by Cardiff Animal Rights having collected 1,253 signatures online and 505 on paper, a total of 2,008 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to implement greater protection for crustaceans and to ban the cruel practice of boiling lobsters, crabs crayfish, prawns etc alive.

Zoologists have found that, unlike humans, lobsters and other crustaceans DON'T have the ability to go into 'shock,' so when they are plunged into a pot of BOILING water, their suffering is prolonged. When other animals, including humans, experience extreme pain, their nervous system shuts down as a coping mechanism. Scientists have found that it takes lobsters & crabs up to 45 seconds to die when plunged into a pot of BOILING water (something which would be considered completely unacceptable in a vertebrate animal like a cow or a pig). To give this perspective, if they are dismembered their nervous system can still function for up to an hour.

The Animal Welfare Act is designed to protect animals on the understanding that sentient creatures can feel pain and we have a moral duty NOT to cause suffering. The Act makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal, both in their keeping and at the time of slaughter. It means that people or organisations who neglect or abuse 'protected' animals can be prosecuted. 'Farmed animals', fish and reptiles are all protected under this Act. However, invertebrates such as crabs and lobsters, crayfish & prawns are not.

Moreover, live crustaceans have been found for sale awaiting their fate on ice trays, packaged and bound tightly in tanks or plastic to be slaughtered at home by the customer. It is considered an act of animal cruelty to boil a lobster alive in Switzerland. The Swiss now need to stun or kill animals before boiling them and lobsters can't be kept alive on ice.

Extend the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to include crustaceans including Lobsters, crabs, prawns & crayfish etc.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-937
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/02588/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS,
Chair of the Petitions Committee,

Dear Janet

11th November 2020

Thank you for your letter of the 28th of October regarding the live boiling of crustaceans.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales at all stages of their life, including at the point of slaughter. The way we treat animals is an important reflection of the values of our society. Animals should be safeguarded from pain, injury, fear and distress. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 provides protection for animals under the control of man, and Welsh Ministers have made and issued legislation and codes of practice to protect and promote animal welfare in Wales under this Act.

Defra and the Devolved Governments of Scotland and Wales have recently commissioned an independent external review of sentience in decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs. The review will consider whether decapods and cephalopods are sentient and therefore whether any additional animal welfare protections need to be afforded to these species. The review could have implications for existing practices involving these animals.

I have noted the Environment Secretary, George Eustice's, commitment to ensure animal sentience is recognised in UK law after we leave the EU and also his Government's view of the importance of this.

We fully agree animals are sentient beings and we will continue to promote and enhance animal welfare, both now and after we have left the EU, within domestic legislation.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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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.

Officials from England and Wales are now working together on the introduction of a Recognition of Sentience Bill, which underlines our commitment to continue improving standards of animal health and welfare in Wales.

It is my intention to put forward a Legislative Consent Motion for those aspects of the Animal Welfare (Recognition of Sentience) Bills which apply to Wales.

The Welsh Government agreed to be included in the draft Animal Welfare (Recognition of Sentience) Bill, which was put out to consultation in December 2017.

The consultation also set out proposals to ensure animal sentience is reflected in domestic law when we leave the EU. A summary of responses was published 7 August 2018 and work on this will continue.

Yours Sincerely



Lesley Griffiths AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

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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.

P-05-937 STOP BOILING CRUSTACEANS ALIVE (lobsters, crabs, crayfish, prawns etc), Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 17.11.20

We would be interested to know, why, if Lesley Griffiths argues that there isn't any proof to say that Lobsters feel pain, why she supported a campaign to band the claws of lobsters to

"Stop them hurting themselves"

How can she support that statement so openly and yet when we ask for the cruel practice of boiling them alive to be banned, she suddenly backtracks on this?

Link to this article is here:

<https://businessnewswales.com/claw-bands-help-welsh-lobsters-stand-out-in-home-crowd/>

Yours,

Cardiff Animal Rights

Agenda Item 3.8

P-05-1026 Petition to ban the snaring of wildlife for use in the fur trade

This petition was submitted by National Anti Snaring Campaign having collected a total of 2,481 signatures.

Text of Petition:

While fur farming was banned in the UK in 2000, fur trapping is still legal for certain wild animals such as foxes, rabbits and mink.

We are campaigning to close this loophole to prevent more animals suffering in these barbaric traps, being killed inhumanely and skinned for their pelts.

We request that all snaring of wild animals for use in the fur trade be abolished and for this law to be upheld by the appropriate authorities and monitored closely.

Additional Information:

This petition has been created in reference to the recent incident which has come to light of a Welsh fur trapper blatantly and deliberately snaring foxes, beating them to death and skinning them in order to sell their pelts in the foreign fur trade.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd South
- North Wales

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1026
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/02590/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

11th November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your further letter of 28 October, regarding the petition to ban the snaring of wildlife for use in the fur trade (Petition P-05-1026).

My officials have met annually with stakeholders prior to and after the publication of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) on the use of snares in Wales in June 2017. Stakeholders have been asked to provide the Welsh Government with evidence as to the extent and use of snares in Wales. They have also been asked to help fill evidence gaps identified by the Welsh Government or suggest ways in which evidence is gathered and share any statistics or data which would assist the Welsh Government in considering whether a voluntary approach is driving up operator practice and animal welfare standards.

The evidence presented is then used produce an annual report, as recommended by the CCERA, and to demonstrate whether the Code has improved animal welfare and decreased the capture rate of non-target animals. A copy of the 2018 report can be viewed [here](#).

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, my officials were unable to meet with stakeholders earlier this year to gather 2019 data and evidence. As it seems unlikely a meeting can take place in the near future, stakeholders have been asked to provide any evidence and data gathered for 2019 and 2020 by email. I anticipate a report, which will cover both 2019 and 2020, will be published in the spring.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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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.

As I have stated in my previous letter of 24 September, if the evidence suggests the voluntary approach is failing to drive up operator practice and animal welfare standards I would seek to regulate the sale and use of snares in Wales. Whilst there is currently no legislative controls in place on the manufacture and sale of snares, I will publish a White Paper which will pave the way for the introduction of an Agriculture (Wales) Bill during the sixth Senedd term. I intend the Bill to provide the legislative powers to regulate all aspects of the sale and use of snares in Wales.

Yours Sincerely,



Lesley Griffiths AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

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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.

**P-05-1026 Petition to ban the snaring of wildlife for use in the fur trade,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 22.11.20**



NATIONAL ANTI SNARING CAMPAIGN



www.antisnaring.org.uk | PO BOX 3058, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN16 3LG

Dear Sir/Madam,

22/11/2020

**Petition to Ban the Use of Snares to catch animals for the fur trade in Wales
being considered at meeting on Tuesday 1 Rhagfyr 2020.**

I reattach my first correspondence on this matter showing recent evidence of non-target snaring and cruelty. If legislation is introduced to make it a criminal offence to snare for the fur trade then this satisfies the demands of this petition.

However, on a wider note regarding snaring, as the Welsh Government in considering whether a voluntary approach is driving up operator practice and animal welfare standards, it needs to note that this can never happen – as the code compliant snare – as recommended is proven to cause life threatening injuries and catch as many non-target animals – mainly badgers, and so can never ensure welfare standards.

I attach a copy of DEFRA's study DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF USE AND HUMANENESS OF SNARES IN ENGLAND AND WALES. This used the same snare with stop, swivel and breaking point promoted in the Welsh code and the snares were checked twice a day.

Sincerely,

Simon Wild

NASC

Agenda Item 3.9

P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)

This petition was submitted by Linda Scott having collected a total of 1,275 signatures online and 134 on paper, a total of 1,409 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to withdraw its support for the "Red Route" (A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Improvement) on the grounds that:

1) The construction of the new road through ancient woodland, and across agricultural land, contradicts Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

2) The recently published plans for a new A494 Dee Bridge, widening of the A494 and other improvements will deliver the Deeside traffic improvements without the need for the 'Red Route'.

3) The costs used to justify the choice of the "Red Route" failed to account for necessary upgrade of the Flintshire Bridge. It also does not include the addition of crawler lane at a major congestion point on the A55, the hill out of Northop towards Holywell. Congestion at these points will be made worse by the construction of the Red Route. The underestimate of the costs used imply that the proposed road cannot be considered value for money. Furthermore, the costs do not include the proposed A494 improvements (outlined in 2).

4) The choice of the Red Route was based on unrepresentative traffic surveys.

5) In considering the Red Route the Welsh Government failed to adequately consult residents of the Flint and Northop areas despite the major potential impact on their communities. Despite costing over a quarter of a billion pounds, the new road would be likely to lead to more traffic congestion in these communities.

6) The International Panel on Climate Change has called for urgent action to reduce CO2 emissions, saying we have only 12 years left to save the world's climate. We need to be investing our limited resources in sustainable transport like rail.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Delyn
- North Wales

P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor), Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 20.11.20

Response to the request for a submission to the Petitions Committee – STAMP: stop the Red Route

Dear Committee,

Thank-you for the opportunity to respond to this stage in the Committee’s deliberations, for which we are very grateful. We would also like to thank the committee for their hard work in following up the different issues which have been raised as a result of the petition. We also gratefully acknowledge the fair handiness of the committee in dealing with our petition.

In summary, nothing which the Minister has said, either orally during his appearance at Committee on 13 October 2020, or in earlier written representations to the Committee or to others, has answered our concerns as set out in our original petition submission. Indeed, his responses have only served to increase our concern about his damaging and expensive proposed highway scheme.

We have decided that, for clarity and ease of reading, we would go back to the points made in our original petition submission and set out how the Minister has failed to answer the points we made.

Additionally, there have been new developments in recent months, which have further undermined the Minister’s case for the proposed mega-scheme, which we explain below.

Finally, and importantly, we set out a small number of requests of the Committee, which we respectfully request you to consider. We think that these requests are sensible, proportionate and moderate recommendations, which we hope the Committee will be able to agree to.

Original point made to Petitions Committee	Our Assessment of the Minister’s response
<p><i>1) The construction of the new road through ancient woodland, and across the best and most versatile agricultural land contradicts Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</i></p>	<p>The Minister made a number of key admissions here, namely that the proposed highway would indeed damage ancient woodland, and that that damage would be permanent and irreversible.</p> <p>He furthermore erroneously states that less than 5% of the ancient woodland at Leadbrook Wood would be damaged, thus failing to recognise the extra width of woodland that would be damaged during construction, edge effects, shading effects, indirect adverse impacts and damage to the connectivity of the wood through severing it in two, which would damage a far greater proportion of the wood, and effectively undermine its ecological resilience. This is clearly not in conformity with the provisions of Planning Policy Wales 10, which states ‘All development decisions, either through development plans, policy choices or individual development management decisions should seek to contribute towards the making of sustainable places and improved well-being.’ [Section 2.2] and ‘Planning policies, proposals and decisions must seek to promote sustainable development and support the well-being of people and communities across Wales.’ [Section 2.8] nor of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 'Ways of Working' section, which emphasises the requirement to avoid in the first instance damaging ecological resilience, but instead seeking imaginative sustainable solutions. It is self-evident that there are non-car sustainable solutions to traffic congestion in the corridor.</p>

<p>2) <i>The recently published plans for a new A494 Dee Bridge, widening of the A494 and other improvements will deliver the Deeside traffic improvements without the need for the 'Red Route'.</i></p>	<p>At the Petitions Committee evidence session on the 1st October 2019, the Flintshire County Council representatives (appearing in support of the Red Route) agreed with this point, in stating that the new A494 Dee Bridge and additional works should be carried and their impact assessed once completed to see if the Red Route is still needed.</p>
<p>3). <i>The costs used to justify the choice of the "Red Route" failed to account for necessary upgrade of the Flintshire Bridge. It also does not include the addition of crawler lane at a major congestion point on the A55, the hill out of Northop towards Holywell. Congestion at these points will be made worse by the construction of the Red Route. The underestimate of the costs used imply that the proposed road cannot be considered value for money. Furthermore, the costs do not include the proposed A494 improvements (outlined in 2).</i></p>	<p>Since the petition, estimated costs have already risen from the original 2017 costing of £210 million to £300 million (as of November 2019). These costs still do not include the additional costs associated with work promised to Flintshire County Council (as eluded to by the Minister in his committee appearance on 13/10/20) or relating to the upgrade of the Flintshire Bridge.</p> <p>In his correspondence of the 6th June 2019 the Minister stated that: "We are not anticipating needing to upgrade the Flintshire Bridge".</p> <p>At the 13/10 evidence session, the Minister confirmed that no report had been produced into the viability of the bridge in the context of the increased traffic associated with the Red Route (and in consequent fails to acknowledge any additional costs associated with the upgrading).</p> <p>Furthermore, he brushed aside concerns over the bridge by claiming that the Flintshire Bridge is "future-proofed".</p> <p>This is incorrect, as we set out below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The bridge was designed over 25 years ago when there was no significant requirement to factor in the impacts of increased storm incidence due to climate change. As the bridge is required to close for safety reasons if wind speeds exceed 55 mph this represents a serious flaw in the bridge design going forward. An analogous upgrade, to the Forth Bridge, Queensferry Crossing, opened in 2017 was estimated to cost in excess of £11 million, and even that may well be inadequate budgetary provision in the Red Route Proposal , given that there are certain additional engineering challenges associated with retro fitting wind shielding to the Flintshire Bridge. b) Furthermore, at the 13/10 evidence session civil servant Andy Falleyn contradicted the Minister in saying some storm-proofing work would be required. c) To expand on the need to factor in climate change into the design, the Thames Barrier (designed to protect London from severe weather) was closed on average 2.2 time a year between 1982 and 2000 (the design and construction period of the bridge), and on an average of 7.75 times per year between 2001-2020. d) During the bridge construction in the mid – 1990s serious issues relating to the underlying geology where discovered in the vicinity of the southern bridge tower (Nichol & Wilson, 2002; Foundation geology of the River Dee estuary cable-stayed bridge, Flintshire, North Wales. Engineering Geology 63, 131–139).

	<p>As such there remain a number of major questions over the viability of the bridge (without upgrading) and so the potential viability of the route without considerable additional expenditure.</p> <p>This confirms our point about the drastic underestimation of the cost of the Red Route– the cost of the Red Route is spiralling out of control</p>
<p><i>The choice of the Red Route was based on unrepresentative traffic surveys.</i></p>	<p>The Minister confirmed in his response of 6 June 2019 that: “In terms of traffic surveys, roadside interview surveys were undertaken in late September and early October 2015, <u>in accordance with national transport appraisal guidance.....</u>” He also confirmed that the traffic projections used in the consultation are based on these surveys. The timing of the surveys (and so the validity of the model) are therefore restricted to pre-COVID commuter traffic and do not account for the major congestion issues associated with holiday traffic – the severity of which the Minister actually acknowledged (in referring to August 2020) in his evidence session appearance on 13/10. All evidence points to the major cause of the holiday traffic issues being associated with the Northop – Halkyn hill to just west of the point at which the Red Route joins the A55. As such the Red Route will clearly only amplify these problems.</p>

Thus in conclusion to this section, it can be seen that the Minister has manifestly failed to answer any of the points we raised in our petition.

Additional Points the Minister has Failed to Answer:

Additionally, the Minister has failed to provide any answers whatsoever to the following points, which have been put to him :-

1. The Impact of COVID-19 on Car Travel:

It is indisputable (and acknowledged by the Minister himself in other contexts), that traffic and work patterns and volumes will change dramatically as a result of COVID-19, including for example the advent of the widespread practice of working from home which the Welsh Government are encouraging. Even during this temporary period before a vaccine is developed, and people are unwilling to use public transport, car traffic is still substantially below pre-COVID levels, and that fall will continue, and accelerate. The Minister’s own department has commissioned work on this, but he has completely failed to take his own department’s work into account in promoting this road scheme. We accept that this work has not been completed yet, but we consider that work on the Red Route should be stopped until it is completed.

2. The Wales Transport Strategy “Y Llwybr Newydd”:

The draft WTS has recently been published, by the Minister’ own department. It establishes a strong presumption against new highway construction, yet the Minister has chosen to ignore his own strategy and plough on with the Red Route.

3. WelTAG – the Welsh Government’s Transport Appraisal Tool:

Similarly, the Minister’s own department has updated the WelTAG to take into account the provisions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and make it more sustainable. Again, the Minister has inexplicably refused to subject the Red Route to his own updated appraisal tool, the praises of which he has loudly sung in other contexts.

Our Requests:

We respectfully request the following of the Committee: -

1. That the Committee make a formal request to the Minister to: -

- a. Pause the project until the advent of the adopted Wales Transport Strategy “Y Llwybr Newydd”, and until the full fallout of drastically-changed work patterns due to COVID-19 have manifested themselves and been fully taken into account.
- b. Pause the project to give a chance for the other appropriate physical and “smart” works programmed on the existing highway network to take effect, in order to judge whether they, in conjunction with the natural fall in traffic volumes, have the desired effect.
- c. Rerun the WelTAG appraisal with the new, fit for purpose WelTAG.

2. Request that the Senedd’s Environment Committee (or it’s successor following the 2021 Assembly elections) convenes an Inquiry into the whole issue, including scrutiny of the whole project, including costs, alternatives and data used to justify the decision to proceed with the Red Route, in the context of COVID19 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

A Final Word:

The International Panel on Climate Change has called for urgent action to reduce CO2 emissions, saying we have only 12 years left to save the world’s climate. We need to be investing our limited resources in sustainable transport like rail.

Our planet continues to warm, since the start of consideration of this road scheme in 2008 global temperature have risen by an average of 0.2 deg C, CO₂ in the atmosphere has risen from 380 ppm to nearly 420 ppm, sea level has risen by 4 cm, Arctic Sea has entered a state of terminal decline, droughts and wild fires have decimated communities globally, storms have become more severe.

The Climate Emergency is a global problem which the Welsh Government is committed to fighting. Building a new 4 lane highway which they concede will result in more greenhouse gas emissions will only make the problem worse.

Your Sincerely,

Professor Tom Rippeth (Chair, STAMP, Stop the red route)

Agenda Item 3.10

P-05-1009 Mandate Welsh Councils to apply a minimum 100% Council Tax surcharge on second homes

This petition was submitted by Michael Murphy having collected a total of 1,026 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Second homes and seasonal homes are destroying our rural communities, while pricing locals out of the housing market. Meanwhile many second home owners avoid paying any Council Tax by claiming small business relief. The Welsh Government should be actively discouraging this and applying penalties of 10% of value of second home for wilful avoidance.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Council tax premiums on second homes

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Tachwedd 2020
Petitions Committee | 17 November 2020

Reference: RS20/14284-2

Petition Number: P-05-1009

Petition title: Mandate Welsh Councils to apply a minimum 100% Council Tax surcharge on second homes

Text of petition: Second homes and seasonal homes are destroying our rural communities, while pricing locals out of the housing market. Meanwhile many second home owners avoid paying any Council Tax by claiming small business relief. The Welsh Government should be actively discouraging this and applying penalties of 10% of value of second home for wilful avoidance.



1. Council tax premiums on second homes

The Welsh Government published [Council Tax dwellings: April 2020 to March 2021](#) in January 2020. Table 6 on page 9 shows that eight authorities were proposing to charge a second home premium in the current financial year:

- Anglesey
- Gwynedd
- Conwy
- Denbighshire
- Flintshire
- Powys
- Ceredigion
- Pembrokeshire

Additionally, [Swansea Council](#) has indicated that it will be charging a council tax premium on second homes from April 2021.

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.