

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-959
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/01038/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

05 May 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 15 April, regarding priority access to supermarket home deliveries for vulnerable individuals and families. As matters relating to food supply fall within my portfolio I am responding as follows.

Covid-19 poses a serious risk to people with certain medical conditions who are extremely vulnerable, a group we are referring to as shielded individuals. The Chief Medical Officer has written to advise these individuals to shield themselves at home for 12 weeks. The group in Wales receiving shielding letters is approximately 90,000 people. More information about this group can be accessed here <https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19>

Where possible, shielded individuals are asked to rely on family, friends, neighbours and community networks to help them with essential supplies. Where they have no help at all, their letter advises them to contact their Local Authority who will help request deliveries of food parcels and provide a range of other social support.

The Welsh Government has developed a straight forward solution in partnership with all the major food retailers who offer on-line food delivery services in Wales and we have struck data sharing agreements with them. Data identifying over 90,000 individuals in households in the shielding group was made available to all major retailers by 8th April. Retailers are now able to allocate priority delivery slots and supermarkets with loyalty schemes have been pro-actively contacting customers who are shielding to advise them of this.

The provision of food, medicines and other care to this shielded group is our top priority.

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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.

All GPs have also been given the lists of people who have been issued a shielding letter and guidance on what discretion they have if they believe someone has been missed out. To ensure all patients with serious underlying health conditions are captured, GPs can use their clinical expertise to advise further patients to shield. GPs now have the ability to issue the letter from the practice in these circumstances and to add the patient to the list of high risk individuals. High risk patients identified centrally or via their GPs will have their details passed to the relevant local authority and supermarkets. It should be noted that it may take up to 10 days from the issuing of the letter for the local authorities and supermarkets to receive notification that a person has been advised to shield and match it with their own database.

We recognise there are many vulnerable people outside the 'shielded' group of individuals and we are working to address their need for support at this time. As with the shielded group, where possible, vulnerable people are asked to rely on family, friends, neighbours and community networks to help them with essential supplies in the first instance. Welsh Government, local authorities and the third sector are working closely to put additional measures in place. Solutions identified and put in place by Welsh Government to date include access to food for those in supported housing and identifying accommodation for a range of vulnerable groups.

The scope of those identified as vulnerable means it will take time to determine the appropriate support for each group. However, please be assured, we are working urgently to help provide support to all those currently in need.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'L'.

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