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Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/01688/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

20 July 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 9 July regarding Petition P-05-898 and the petition to ban the use of A boards in Wales. You have asked about the considerations given to accessibility issues in relation to configuring public spaces for social distancing as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip's Disability Equality Forum continues to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to advise Welsh Government on the key issues that affect disabled people in Wales. This has become increasingly important during Covid-19 as the Forum meets more frequently, ensuring the voice of disabled people is not lost.

Issues around blind and visually impaired people's difficulties in maintaining the 2m social distance rule, and in manoeuvring around changing physical environments have been raised at the Disability Equality Forum. The RNIB and Guide Dogs Cymru have also drafted a briefing which has been submitted to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip and the Minister for Economy and Transport, to highlight their concerns on this issue. A response letter has been issued by the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport.

We hugely value the support and guidance our national disability organisations provide to the Welsh Government and to communities right across Wales. Welsh Government officials are in contact with a number of these organisations and there are mechanisms in place to capture information and emerging issues. This information is then being considered in the decisions and actions being taken by the Welsh Government. By ensuring good communication continues, we will be able to share and disseminate information and advice quickly.

In June we published guidance entitled "Creating safer public places: coronavirus" which can be found on our website at <https://gov.wales/creating-safer-public-places-coronavirus>.

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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.

The guidance states that legal obligations to ensure that policies, practices, procedures and working arrangements support the equality and well-being of disabled people are set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Whilst the Equality Act 2010 uses the 'medical model' definition of disability, in the development and implementation of policies and programmes the Welsh Government applies the Social Model of Disability, recognising that those who are covered by the legal definition of disability are frequently disabled by barriers in society, or the workplace, rather than by their impairment or condition.

In designing Safer Public Spaces organisations should consider accessibility issues carefully, carrying out equality impact assessments and consider the particular needs, and consult with, the people who share protected characteristics.

Consideration of the needs of partially sighted / blind people is particularly important given the potential impact of temporary, or changed layouts. Working closely with organisations such as RNIB at the planning stage can ensure needs are as fully met as possible.

The guidance also contains further references reminding managers of public spaces to consider the needs of all users, including people with disabilities or those with sight issues, at all stages in designing safer places.

I hope this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

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