

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,