



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
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Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter of 6 November regarding a petition about allowing socially distanced meetings in private gardens. The petition mentions care home visits, shielding, as well as general gatherings in gardens.

Care home visits are permitted under alert level four for compassionate reasons, but should be restricted to outdoor visits, or visits within visitor pods or similar enclosed spaces. These visits will be suspended in the event of an outbreak at the home.

Indoor visits in care homes are permitted in exceptional circumstances including, but not restricted to end-of-life, as they have been throughout the pandemic.

The ultimate decision on whether, and in what circumstances care home visits take place, rests with the individual provider. In each case, the provider needs to put in place appropriate risk assessments, social distancing and safety measures before allowing visits, and people are asked to contact them before travelling.

Please see a link to the care home visiting guidance: <https://gov.wales/visits-care-homes-guidance> and a guide to the alert levels for social care, published by the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-in-wales-for-social-care-services-for-adults-and-children>

Shielding was advised between March and August 2020. The Chief Medical Officer has updated the guidance to support people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to protect themselves from exposure to coronavirus as Wales is now at alert level four. The advice is now that clinically extremely vulnerable people should not attend work or school outside the home.

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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.

We know long periods of isolation can be harmful for mental and physical health, therefore extremely clinically vulnerable people can remain part of a support bubble, as long as they take appropriate precautions. They are encouraged to continue going outside to exercise and attend medical appointments.

Everyone in Wales is currently subject to regulations in place at alert level four and therefore must stay at home. People are not able to meet anybody indoors or outdoors socially unless they are part of an exclusive support bubble.

Coronavirus is a highly infectious virus – it thrives on contact between people. The new variant in the UK is even more contagious. 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. This means reducing all social contacts as far as possible.

Best wishes

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

MARK DRAKEFORD