

PE1841/B

Petitioner submission of 14 December 2020

Thank you for sending over the response from the government and allowing me to reply. I myself am part of the core steering group which has met regularly with the cabinet secretary, and we are thankful for the time she has given us.

The guidance has always been welcomed by family members but it is just that, guidance. As stated by the government in parliament, they cannot force care homes to follow this guidance. This has resulted in a postcode lottery surrounding the visiting arrangements in care homes. We strongly believe every resident in every care home deserves the same access to family, as is their human right.

This petition has been lodged with the parliament to request open dialogue and introduction of legislation to guarantee that anyone residing in a care home will never be isolated from family or friends for this long again (at time of writing ten months).

We need to learn from the last ten months and recognise the detrimental effect that this isolation has caused. Whilst trying to protect residents in care homes from Covid many have deteriorated and died from non-Covid related issues. Since the group was started on 12th August there have been 4102 deaths in care homes, of which 530 were Covid related. Most of these residents and their families were denied time together and the effect this will have on those families is irreparable.

This is why we are reaching out to the government to bring in legislation to ensure residents will always have access to at least one person during any outbreak.

Please understand that the above is coming from a heartfelt plea so I would urge you to go to the Care Home Relatives Scotland Facebook page, where we have published have three surveys which collated evidence between—

- Survey 1 (21.09.20 - 29.09.20)
- Survey 2 (27.10.20 - 03.11.20)
- Survey 3 (19.11.20 - 30.11.20)

This information illustrates clearly that the guidance does not work in the way intended and the experiences of residents and families in care homes across Scotland vastly differ.

I would like to finish by highlighting that if the guidance was working, then there would have been no need for a petition to be lodged with parliament. We can no longer bury our heads in the sand as a country and allow our residents in care homes to be isolated. We are their voices and we will continue to fight for rights to be connected and interact with family in the same way as staff and those living in the community do.

I would appreciate it if you would reconsider having representation on behalf of families and residents at the meeting next week. This is a very emotive subject and needs to have all sides represented.