

**PE1841/P**

Pauline Rodger submission of 24 February 2021

I am writing in support of this petition to allow at least one designated visitor into care homes in Scotland as a legal right, not simply as guidance.

The harm that has been done to the physical and mental health of care home residents over the past year, in my opinion far outweighs any 'protection' from COVID they have been given by, what I believe to be, draconian, lengthy visiting restrictions advised by the Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland.

During this time a family member, who has Alzheimer's disease, has gone from being a happy and dignified person who enjoyed life to being permanently confused, nervous and frequently distressed at their own inability to comprehend the simplest of things. Their journey to this very sad place has been a torture for them.

When initial restrictions came in, their care home had an outbreak of COVID and they became infected with the virus. Confined to their room, they became very distressed and I received phone calls from them several times every day. They cried, asked why they had been put in prison and begged me to save them. This torment lasted many weeks until they gave up fighting and became resigned to their fate. I no longer receive calls as they no longer understand how to use a telephone.

Since weekly outdoor visits have been introduced, they spend a lot of our precious 30 minutes talking about how confused they are, asking me why I won't come in and have a cup of tea with them, and apologising because their mind is so confused. This is in stark contrast to the lovely times we spent together pre-COVID when we would laugh a lot, sharing jokes, family news and memories, while out and about several times a week. They shared similar lovely times with other family members.

Their deterioration is as a direct result of being cut-off from the family they love and need to sustain them, it is not a result of any natural deterioration in their Alzheimer's disease. Before the cruel and lengthy ban on meaningful visiting was put in place, they had been in their care home for over 2 years. They had thrived there, and their mental and physical health had improved, rather than deteriorated, in that time.

If this story was unique, it would be just one example of the serious harm that results when someone is denied their human right to a personal and family life. But this story is not unique: it is only one of many thousands that could be told by those who have been confined and cut-off for a year from all those who sustain them.

This cruel destruction of the lives and spirits of Scotland's most vulnerable citizens must never happen again. That is why I support this petition and the call to enshrine in law every care home resident's right to meaningful visits from at least one designated loved one.