

## **PE1841/AA**

Jane Cameron submission of 10 March 2021

I strongly agree with and support this petition. I have two elderly relatives who are in care homes. One has advanced vascular dementia and heart failure and their mobility is increasingly limited. The other has extreme arthritis, with limited hearing and sight and is mainly bed-bound. They are both bewildered and confused with the ongoing visiting restrictions and are lonely and upset with lack of meaningful family contact. Their physical and mental health has deteriorated in the past year. The WIFI reception in the care home is extremely poor and this limits the extent and quality of video calls with them, on top of sight and hearing limitations. I last held their hands and hugged them in March 2020 and I last saw them in September 2020 by standing outside an open door, in wind and rain, while they were inside and covered with 3 blankets each.

The guidance issued from Scottish Government has been well-meaning but as it is not legally binding it has been implemented in various different ways and often not at all; leading to a post-code lottery, endless confusion, queries over Human Rights, upset and stress for Care Home Managers and Staff, the heart-breaking continuation of on-going separation of families and the desperate sadness and misery of isolated elderly who are separated from their partners, children and grand-children. The lack of legislation to enforce the guidance has significantly and adversely impacted on the health and well-being of many, including my family members ([see Care Home Relative Scotland submissions](#)) and has tragically resulted in some end-of-life situations where an elderly person has passed away without the comforting presence of a loved one. We cannot allow this to happen in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scotland.

Throughout the pandemic, there should have been Scottish Government legislation passed to ensure that every resident in a care home was given the opportunity to have one designated visitor / care giver who would offer an essential role in care-giving and supporting mental health and well-being. They would follow the same infection control and testing procedures which care home staff and other health visitors follow, with vaccinations too.

The Scottish Government Guidance published on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 “Open with Care”: supporting meaningful contact in care homes” is not legally binding. Once again we have post-code lottery on implementation, a wide variety of adaptations and changes and in several cases, no implementation at all (Care Home Relatives Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland Action on Rights). Guidance can be (and is) ignored – legislation cannot!

I fully support petition PE01841 and urge the Scottish Government to back legislation being dubbed “Annes Law” and lead the way in enshrining the rights of residents in care homes so that future generations never have to be separated in this way again.