

PE1841/BB

Morag Brownlie submission of 11 March 2021

I am writing in support of this petition.

What is being asked for should be kept in perspective - legislation to enable **one person** to be designated by the resident to be given care giver status and allowed access to them; this will most likely be the resident's spouse or child and therefore will also maintain their human right to family life.

I do not underestimate the devastation felt when there is a Covid outbreak in a care home and the heavy responsibility felt by staff and management - leading to the decisions to lockdown and lock out relatives. However, the human rights disaster and the detrimental impact on residents/relatives health that is being caused by visiting restrictions is an equal wrong.

A few care homes have been beacons of common sense, using infection prevention control measures to enable good practice, keeping visits going whilst keeping Covid out. Their residents have continued to receive and benefit from unrestricted time, shared family knowledge and memories and the kind of love that it is impossible for a staff member to give, no matter how good they are (and thank God for the good ones).

I have a family member with profound hearing loss who visits her husband who has advanced Parkinson's disease and whose speech has deteriorated drastically since June. They do not want 30 minutes of forced conversation that, in their words, makes them feel useless, leaving them still disconnected and isolated by constraints imposed without clearly evidenced justification. Their way of communicating is to have comfort in being in each-others company, to hold hands and have a little nap, without watching the clock.

Yes, the government guidelines are a start, but I have a concern that phrases such as 'wherever possible' / 'if it is safe to do so' / 'appropriate local flexibility' can still be used to restrict meaningful access to zero if there is a positive case in a home, cases rise again or there is an outbreak of a variant, as happened after the October guidance. The fears that what has been experienced by relatives over the last twelve months could be experienced again in the future are not unfounded - hence my belief that legislation is necessary.

Legislation should not be viewed as unhelpful but as a positive step forward. It is acknowledged that there is a wide spectrum in the standards of social care and work needs to be done - work that residents, relatives and government (as customers), should have an equal input on, working as partners with the care sector.

Time is of the essence so that hope can be given back to residents before many more simply give up and want to die.

My family member, in broken speech expresses "four walls and a telly", "separation", "better way".

Anne's Law could be the cornerstone of building back better.