

PE1841/HH

Catherine Mckay submission of 13 March 2021

I support this petition from Natasha Hamilton for the following reasons.

I believe that the right to continual family contact/support for a resident in a care home must never be taken away. It is a resident's own home, which they are paying for, and it is their decision (or their power of attorney) to decide who they see in their own home. It is also their decision to be able to leave the home and be part of their local community.

A care home is not a place of imprisonment but just a place where you can live with more support. Families and friends are vital in this role and are part of the care package for their relative. They provide various amounts of support to residents in care homes, for example walks in gardens, being taken for runs in the car, assistance eating, personal care etc.

Whilst we all accepted that care homes had to be locked down in March 2020 to protect the residents, this did not work as covid positive patients were taken to care homes where the virus quickly spread. Also, many care staff work in multiple homes which caused some spread too. I do not believe that families were ever responsible for any spread of the virus. Latterly when restrictions were lifted for every other member of society, care home residents were told they couldn't be part of this. I believe that this was totally inhumane and gave no consideration to Article 8 of the of the European Convention on Human Rights the which advises care home residents have a right to a family life! No social bubbles for them, or eat out to help out and finally no Christmas!!

Residents and families were caught in the middle between the Government, Public Health and Care home providers. It has been a constant fight to get to see our loved ones, even through a window!! Meantime more than 15,000 people have died without being able to see the people they loved the most, in the last stages of their lives.

Now care homes have been given new guidelines on opening with care but there is no consistency and there are huge differences from care home to care home. It is unfair for the care homes to have all the power and relatives/residents to have none which is the reason I support Anne's Law. We must have legislation to stop this happening again. It needs a more balanced approach. Other countries have managed to pass laws which means residents are allowed to see designated visitors. Some people in the UK haven't seen their relatives in a year. Guidelines aren't enough as care home providers will tell you that 'they don't have to follow them'. To have Anne's law passed would benefit everyone as all parties involved in the decision-making process would know that one

designated visitor would be part of any future plans and restrictions.

I would therefore request that the petition is included in the legacy document to the next Parliament when action should be taken as a matter of priority to secure some rights for vulnerable people in care homes.