



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Mark Drakeford MS,
First Minister,
Welsh Government,
By email

19 June 2020

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Dear First Minister,

I am writing following the announcement you made today with regards to unlocking Wales.

As I am sure you can imagine your statement has left a lot of questions, uncertainty, and some discontent amongst constituents and businesses. Indeed, I am already receiving emails about the matter, and wish to raise one point with you urgently: the requirement to stay local. Indeed, as was noted in the Welsh Government press release on the changes today:

- The requirement is to stay local and not generally travel more than 5 miles from home;
- New guidance will make it clear that people are able to travel outside their local area on compassionate grounds, to include seeing people at a care home or a youth offender institution;
- People who are eligible to vote in overseas elections, where voting must be done in person, will be able to travel.

Having considered the document entitled Coronavirus regulations: changes from Monday 22 June I have read the following:

'You may have compassionate reasons for visiting someone where that person is suffering from a physical or mental illness; has suffered a bereavement or you are concerned about their wellbeing for other reasons, such as loneliness'.

Many individuals, parents, grandparents, children, friends, are being kept apart here in Wales by your 5 mile rule. I would be grateful if you could clarify whether you have consulted the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales on the impact of the stay local requirement on the individuals they champion, and how your decision is in line with Article 8: 'the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence'.

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Whilst I appreciate that concern about wellbeing for reasons such as loneliness are noted, I do not see why you can as a minimum not clearly state that families can travel any distance to see their loved ones. Indeed, I have been contacted by constituents in despair at the prospect of having to wait until 6 July. Undoubtedly, this may qualify them for traveling any distance to see their loved ones because your stay local requirement is causing mental suffering and impacting on wellbeing.

I implore you to change the guidance as outlined above urgently. It would be in the best interest of families and our residents' mental health and wellbeing for you to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS