

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1209
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00791/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Member of the Senedd for Alyn & Deeside
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03 January 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2023 in relation to petition P-06-1209 on the creation of a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales. This response is further to my correspondence on this subject on 8 October 2021, 10 January 2023, 7 September 2023 and 1 November 2023.

I have previously outlined my commitment to promote self-identification by unpaid carers and recognition of carers by professionals: most significantly health, education and social care practitioners. This remains the first priority of our national unpaid carers strategy and we continue to fund and work closely with the national carers organisations to improve professional recognition and the recording of information on unpaid carers. There is ongoing work by Welsh Government officials to improve the data on unpaid carers reported by local authorities. A framework for consistent and comprehensive local authority data reporting on unpaid carers is in development.

The feasibility of a national carers register has been looked into thoroughly. I have concluded that, as it was envisioned, it would not be of significant value or benefit to unpaid carers, or other stakeholders. This view has been supported by Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales and by the Ministerial Advisory Board for Unpaid Carers, following its last meeting on 25 September 2023.

One of the issues arising from the exploratory work into a register has been that, due to GDPR restrictions, Welsh Government cannot access details of individual unpaid carers held by local authorities, health boards and other organisations to create a national list. Individuals would need to sign up to a Welsh Government list, in addition to the other lists mentioned. Other list holders would need to continue with their own lists for their own purposes.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This would create uncertainty around accuracy and representativeness of any collated data used from such a list. Some people who do not readily identify themselves as unpaid carers are unlikely to subscribe to an additional list, are harder to reach due to not being online or may not wish to share their details in any event. Where people's circumstances and personal data changes, they would need to proactively update their personal information. Due to the difficulties associated with this, a register generated in this way could not be used to collect accurate data on the numbers of unpaid carers in Wales and their circumstances.

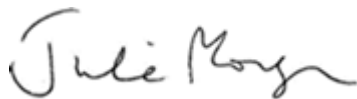
While I have outlined this in previous correspondence, the purpose of repeating is to respond to the request for clarification in your last letter about the 'verification of unpaid carer status'.

If existing or newly developed 'carers' card' schemes were to be considered as potential sources of data on unpaid carers, in addition to their primary purpose, the currency and reliability of any data drawn would need to be very carefully considered. I do not view this as a matter of trust, but more about the difficulties in reaching the levels of confidence in data sufficient for use by Welsh Government in its official statistics.

My officials have been in touch with the petitioner and have indicated they are interested to follow the progress of the digital version of the Carers UK card in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

My officials have arranged a face-to-face meeting with the petitioner in January to discuss any potential misunderstandings with regard to Welsh Government support for unpaid carers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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