



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1099  
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03421/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

22 December 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your correspondence of 2 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-05-1099: Don't shut the Hospitality Sector (Pubs, Restaurants, Cafes) without providing scientific evidence.

Since your correspondence was received, you will be aware that the First Minister announced that we have had to take the difficult decision to bring forward the alert level four restrictions for Wales to come into force from midnight on 19 December. This means that hospitality will close along with non-essential retail, close contact services, gyms and leisure centres. Stay-at-home restrictions will also come into effect allowing two households to come together to form a Christmas bubble on Christmas Day only. Throughout the alert level four period, a single person household will be able to join with one other household. While we all want to avoid further disruption to businesses and plans for Christmas, our overriding duty is to protect lives here in Wales.

We are in the midst of a public health crisis and it is clear that we are seeing the prevalence of the virus growing again in communities across Wales. It is essential, therefore, that everyone, individuals, businesses and public organisations take every opportunity to control and contain the spread of the virus. I have noted the comments enclosed from the original petitioner in respect of the impact of the implementation of new national measures to control and ultimately reduce the spread of coronavirus in Wales. However, to protect people's health and prevent more people losing their lives these measures are necessary.

Coronavirus thrives on our normal human behaviour and in the situations where we come into contact with each other for any prolonged amount of time. We also know that as the consumption of alcohol increases, social distancing and the perception of risk decreases. Wherever people mix, there's a risk of coronavirus being passed on. Our national measures have been designed to help protect us in our normal daily lives but particularly in those everyday situations where we are in contact with other people and there is a risk of us catching or spreading coronavirus. We also ask everyone to make small changes to their

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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.

own lives – above and beyond the regulations – to reduce their contact with others to keep themselves and their families safe.

To strengthen the national measures in Wales, we looked carefully at all the evidence about what interventions work – this is in keeping with the approach we have adopted throughout the pandemic. A recent paper by the UK's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has analysed all the interventions taken in the UK to see which are the most effective. These are set out in this paper:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/939057/S0905\\_191120\\_O\\_Four\\_Nations\\_Autumn\\_Interventions\\_V1\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939057/S0905_191120_O_Four_Nations_Autumn_Interventions_V1_.pdf)

It concludes the measures in Scotland's level three and England's tier three are effective. Many of these measures are already in place in Wales.

These regulations do not seek to single out a particular sector – this is a strengthening of the overall package national measures, which seeks to protect public health and reduce the incidence of coronavirus in Wales. Our decisions are informed by the latest available scientific evidence – including assessment of Track and Trace data, which is published by the Technical Advisory Group on its [website](#).

The First Minister confirmed in his Press Conference on 11 December that the current measures will remain in place and that an updated version of Wales' Covid-19 control plan will be published. It is available at: <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-control-plan-alert-levels-wales>. The plan sets out in detail how national measures will be introduced in a more uniform and predictable way, depending on a range of indicators, including the level of the virus in Wales and the risk of infection.

To support the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors, we are putting in place a £340m support package to help businesses affected by the restrictions through to the New Year. This includes a specific £180m fund for hospitality and leisure businesses and the supply chain – a triage tool will be available on the [Business Wales website](#) by the 11th of December for businesses to check their eligibility for the fund and the fund will open to applications on the week commencing the 11th of January.

Many people have adhered to the rules and regulations and we are grateful to hospitality businesses which have, in the main worked very hard to keep people safe. Whilst the main aim of these measures is to minimize the level of risk, it is ultimately everyone's responsibility (including a personal responsibility) in individual circumstances to consider the most sensible thing to do to avoid the spread of the virus.

Yours sincerely,



**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism