



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1100
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03620/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AS/MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

22 December 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-05-1100: Allow pubs and restaurants in Wales to serve alcohol/stay open after 6pm.

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.

An updated version of Wales' Covid-19 control plan has been published and 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.

In response to the Committee and the particular points raised by the Petitioner, we have had to make very difficult decisions taking into account the direct risks of coronavirus harm with economic and social risks that resulted in putting further restrictions on the hospitality industry and on the indoor leisure industry.

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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.

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. 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 there's a risk of coronavirus being passed on. Whilst the majority of hospitality businesses across Wales have worked hard to safely operate in line with guidance, providing safe environments for their customers, TAC (The Technical Advisory Cell) studied evidence: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transmission-risk-in-the-hospitality-sector/transmission-risk-in-the-hospitality-sector>

which supports that alcohol consumption still presents a major risk factor in the spread of infectious diseases and helps scientists understand where transmission is occurring. The effect of drinking alcohol – particularly drinking too much alcohol – can make people engage in more risk-taking behaviours. It can also make it harder for people to recall where they have been and who they were in close contact with if they are asked by contact tracing teams in the event someone tests positive. 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.

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 is available on the [Business Wales website](#) 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