



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/02208/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

13 April 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding current maternity visiting guidance: Petition P-05-1035 Allow birthing partners to be present at scans, the start of labour, birth and after the birth.

The safety and wellbeing of all mothers and babies, as well as the staff who support them, is at the heart of the guidance on women being accompanied by their partner or nominated person when accessing maternity services during the current time.

After listening to women and families and consulting with midwives, doctors and sonographers, we have made amendments to the visiting guidance for maternity services. This guidance can be found by following this link:

<https://gov.wales/hospital-visiting-during-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance>

Visiting in maternity services will now be based on a risk assessment approach by individual health boards. This will take into account local transmission rates, environmental factors such as room sizes, ability to socially distance and infection prevention and control risks in enabling partners to safely accompany pregnant women and new mothers.

This approach applies not only in clinics (for attendance at scans) and in waiting areas but also on maternity wards where women may be supported in early labour. This early labour support is often provided in shared ward areas where distance between bed spaces and flow through wards needs to be considered. While we are in alert level 4 we would not expect relaxation of visiting restrictions such as partners being present prior to the woman being in active labour but would expect as infections fall and a lower alert level is announced that relaxation of restrictions would follow. This would be locally determined and risk assessed.

Any changes to local visiting restrictions will be reported to the Chief Nursing Officer.

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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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "Gething".

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Minister for Health and Social Services