



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-1059
Ein cyf/Our ref: FM -/01697/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd

Petitions@senedd.wales

3 November 2020

Dear Chair

I am writing to respond to your letter regarding a petition about attendance at places of worship.

I understand the concerns raised by the petitioner. However, these are not decisions we have taken lightly.

The scientific advice the government received is that a short and deep firebreak lockdown is necessary to curtail the rapid rise in cases of the virus, to prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed in the coming weeks and ultimately to save lives.

There are very few options in front of us – without a firebreak now, we face the prospect of a more drawn-out set of restrictions, similar to the open-ended lockdown of the spring, which ultimately would be a greater impingement on all our lives.

I recognise and applaud the responsible contribution faith groups have made in responding to the pandemic by creating new ways of practising faith and making sure worship can take place in a safe environment. I am extremely grateful to the faith leaders who have worked closely with us to develop guidance and communicate with the wider faith community. I am confident that this has made an important contribution to the management of the pandemic.

However, we continue to face a situation where transmission rates are too high. Transmission can only be limited by reducing the number of contacts we each have with one another and in this context it is not a judgement on the relative value of the activity that has guided our decision, it is the immediacy or long-lasting impact of the harm that results.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru • ps.firstminister@gov.wales

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.

The advice we have received is that the firebreak must be intensive and we must stay at home as much as possible to limit our contact with others. We are asking people to make sacrifices for a time-limited period so we can regain control of this pandemic and protect people in Wales.

I hope this offers you and your petitioner an explanation of our decision.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD