

P-05-1041 A clear policy and funding for hospitals and care homes for virtual visiting during times of lockdown, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 20.11.20

Further to your letter I write with my response I wish to be considered as part of the petition committee discussion.

I feel the main issue surrounding this is the lack of clarity with any guidance provided by WAG.

There should be clear guidance specific to keeping people in care homes and hospitals in touch with their families not included as if an after thought with other guidance such as infection control.

This i feel is confirmed by the comment that extra funding provided was predominantly for infection control but could be used for purchasing digital equipment.

Were those receiving the funding made absolutely clear of this point? Is it fair to make them choose between using funding for infection control or other areas during a pandemic? particularly as they could be then criticised for such action if there are then infection control issues.

keeping families intouch should have its own guidance and funding to show it is held with the same importance to other areas of need.

There are sadly many distressing accounts of families who have not seen loved ones in any way for months and then they have sadly passed away, this is horrendous and I would question if human rights have been taken into account and also the severe impact on peoples mental health.

In our case we had no contact in any way or form for 9 weeks initially, as you can imagine knowing dementia is a progressive disease this was very distressing to then see the severe decline in mums presentation.

having the care home action plan is excellent, however again it is not clear robust guidance and statements such as " ensure residents well being" could be interpreted in different ways.

whilst the digital funding is excellent given that there are 23000 care home spaces in Wales around 1000 items is nowhere near enough to have a significant impact.

In mum and many other peoples cases with dementia they are placed in mental health hospital settings so all of the suggested funding would not be available to them either, I have had this clarified when enquiring regarding the digital funding.

There is no clear guidance that even mentions people in such circumstances and the WAG hospital visiting guidance is again unclear and open to interpretation, something we have personally experienced depending on what member of staff we speak to.

whilst the action plan is much appreciated families have been in these circumstances since March, the prioritisation of producing this doesn't appear to have been seen until many months later.

In many areas of the world the elderly are held in very high regard, people matter and should be treated with the dignity they deserve please let's show the world that Wales do the same. Time is precious and for many families like ours it is slipping away.