



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ81178

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

19 Oct 2020

Dear Janet,

I'm writing in response to WQ81178: What evidence has the Minister relied on to not include being on holiday as a reasonable excuse for individuals not residents in the Conwy County Borough area to visit and stay in the county, in The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.2) (Wales) Regulations 2020, as amended?

There is a growing body of evidence that a small number of individuals can be responsible for up to 80% of new infections. Restricting travel to or from a population with a rising level of uncontrolled community incidence is more likely to prevent uncontrolled spread into nearby areas. This allows more support and resource to be allocated to the local area, and a faster resolution of community outbreak. Travel restrictions also enable local consultants for communicable disease control to trace contacts more effectively, ensuring control of the disease. This is analogous to the justification for asking people to quarantine after travelling abroad to areas of high prevalence.

Using novel techniques developed by specialists in Bangor University and abroad, we are monitoring the wastewater from certain points along the coast of North Wales and North-West England. We are looking for significant loads of genomic copies of SAR-COV-2, which show an increase in the likely prevalence of Covid-19 in the catchment area. We have seen a steady rise in the number of genome copies in the wastewater in the past weeks. This may be indicative of tourists who are carrying Covid-19 visiting the region.

The reasonable excuses included in the Regulations broadly mirror those that were in place during earlier periods of national travel restrictions, such as to 'stay at home' or to 'stay local'. These are based on the need to do something and the potential harms from not doing so. Given the risks of either new infections being brought into and seeded within the county or spreading infection elsewhere, holidays have not been included in these limited exceptions.

We review these regulations and restrictions every week to ensure they remain proportionate.

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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, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Minister for Health and Social Services