

## **PE1841/Y**

Madelene Fergus submission of 6 March 2021

I am writing in support of the petition PE1841.

There is recent published guidance (24/02/21) to support care homes to provide meaningful contact between residents and their loved ones. This should be very welcomed news however this guidance does not provide assurance. The previous guidance published on 12/10/20 was similar and yet that initial feeling of absolute joy was very soon turned to absolute despair for thousands of care home residents and their families as most if not all care homes did not follow this guidance.

I fear this will happen again and we are already starting to see the inconsistencies threaded through the many heart-breaking stories. You must be made aware of the reality of the situation in care homes as we may all be at the mercy of this fate, therefore I plead to government ministers to fully back legislation, 'Anne's Law', to help put right one of humanities greatest mistakes.

I write both as a Public Health Nurse and as someone with a loved one who is a care home resident.

What we have faced this year is like nothing before, I do get it, I understand the pressures and the conflicting decisions that need to be made. I see daily in my role how difficult this is, however, I have never in the whole of my career seen such disregard to our elderly care residents. I abide by the Nursing and Midwifery Council code and at the heart of the code is 'do no harm' but the indirect harm to care home residents due to Covid 19 is in its kindness words, devastating. I see it both professionally and personally. I understood the initial closure and I like most others agreed with it but never in my wildest dreams did I ever consider that 1 year down the line, I and thousands of others would not have been in the same room as the ones we hold so dear. There have been many experts in Infection, Prevention and Control who have been advocating for safe visiting and yet it has fallen on deaf ears.

The pain and immense suffering for thousands could and should have been avoided long before now with simple safe infection prevention and control procedures, the same as what all the staff including myself follow day in and day out, and yet every day we are still allowing care home residents to be left without their family, their sole reason for living. I struggle to sleep at night with what our society has become and so should every single one of us who play a part in it.

Please keep your eyes wide open to the truth and the reality of what is happening right now in our care homes and support legislation. Guidance will never be enough, we have learned the hard truth of how easy our rights can be stripped away from us and I fear this is the start of a very dangerous road for us all.