



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ81818

Neil McEvoy MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

30 January 2021

Dear Neil,

I am writing in response to WQ81818: What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the number of potential deaths caused by lockdowns compared to the number of lives they are projected to save?

There is no evidence to suggest that lockdown causes a comparable number of deaths to the number caused by Covid-19. The Office of National Statistics have provided [UK level death statistics](#), which estimate 100,162 deaths from COVID-19 within 28 days of a positive test since the beginning of March 2020¹. The paper also states that the main morbidity impacts of the lockdown are expected to come from an estimated increase in musculoskeletal conditions, increased domestic abuse and increased mental health problems.

A report [submitted to SAGE on 15 July 2020](#) included an unmitigated reasonable worst case modelling scenario which estimated excess UK deaths of 410,000-454,000 up to March 2021. While the Welsh Government is able to localise estimates of excess deaths at UK level from the four harms for Wales, it does not have a specific estimate of the direct COVID-19 vs. indirect deaths specifically from lockdowns.

Welsh Government is acutely aware of the indirect harms caused by the interventions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to mitigate against these harms and protect our most vulnerable citizens has been a central part of our decision making. We have sought to monitor and mitigate against these harms wherever possible and our strategy to ensure that decisions around lockdown restrictions deliver a positive and socially equitable impact is available in the document [‘Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation’](#).

Every life lost is an individual tragedy and suicide is preventable with action taken to protect people’s mental health. Welsh Government will continue to be vigilant and responsive in this area, working with resources such as The Suicide Information Database-Cymru to provide a

¹ As of 15th January 2021

strong basis for suicide prevention and mental health support. A list of resources to support mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic is available at <https://gov.wales/safe-help/mental-health>.

Welsh Government is also aware that not every home is a place of safety and for some, it may become a place where isolation increases the risk of abuse and control. The 'Home shouldn't be a place of fear' campaign has been launched to let those at risk know that help and support is available for those who are experiencing or know someone experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence during the coronavirus emergency. More information is available at <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/staying-safe-during-coronavirus-emergency>.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services