



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Planning Inspectorate Wales update

Inspectors Decisions during the Pre-election period and  
current Covid 19 advice.

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# Contents

## Issuing appeal decisions during the pre-election period in Wales

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### COVID 19 customer advice

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## Issuing appeal decisions during the pre-election period in Wales

The Planning Inspectorate and its Inspectors, always aim to issue decisions promptly after the event. However, in the run-up to local and national elections we are always mindful of ensuring that Inspector's decisions concerning proposals which have raised particular sensitivities or interest in an area, cannot be deemed to have influenced the election or have been used to electoral advantage by any interested body. Accordingly, those decisions are not issued until the election results have been announced.

Each decision as to whether an Inspectors decision should be held back is taken on the circumstances of the case by senior managers in Planning Inspectorate Wales. We shall of course ensure that any such decision delayed for the reasons above is issued promptly after the election results are announced.

## COVID 19 customer advice

We have been carrying out site visits as far as possible and subject to safeguarding measures since May 2020, this includes the period of the imposed local restrictions, the tighter firebreak restriction and the all Wales Alert Level 4, entered in to on Sunday 20th December. However, Welsh Government (WG) have now begun to relax restrictions which allows us to relax our position on not undertaking site visits where entering a building is required.

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We want to ensure the work keeps moving and all involved with our casework receive timely outcomes. Our current approach to carrying out site visits is as follows;

- For external inspections, where access to a site is required, the preference will be for appellants to be asked to unlock a gate but absent themselves during the visit
- For internal inspections (whether Access Required Site Visit, or Accompanied Site Visit), prior to entering the building it will need to be ensured that a 2 metre distance can be maintained between parties at all times

We are not currently holding physical-only hearings and inquiries, but we are running hearings and inquiries virtually. Cases requiring an oral event are triaged against a number of factors and are allocated accordingly. We will work with parties to an appeal to ensure they are as comfortable as they can be in engaging with the virtual event and can be properly heard. As lockdown restrictions continue to ease, our approach will be reviewed.

In order to limit the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), our Inspectors are continuing to follow Welsh Government advice having particular regard to its [Guidance for Working in other People's homes](#).

Our support staff are working from home as far as possible and we have limited access to our offices for only essential purposes. Electronic means of communications is the preferred method. We are not able to guarantee documents submitted in hard copy will be processed quickly. Documents can be e-mailed to [wales@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:wales@planninginspectorate.gov.uk). Our general enquiry line is 0303 444 5940.

We are now processing appeals normally with all local planning authorities in Wales.

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