



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein Cyf/ Our ref ATISN 13897

5 May 2020

Dear,

ATISN 13897– Food Provision for the Over 70's in Wales

Thank you for refining your request referenced above to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 29 April.

I have interpreted your request as follows:

- Has the Welsh Government considered, or will prepare, a list of over 70's to provide to supermarkets? Noting that England may have made a decision to do this.

I can confirm that the Welsh Government does not hold any information that details a list, or arrangements for a list to be created specifically for over 70's in Wales to be provided to supermarkets.

The Welsh Government has, however, provided a list of extremely vulnerable people in Wales (i.e. those who have received a shielding letter) to supermarkets in order for them to be prioritised for services such as home deliveries.

Extremely vulnerable is a new classification, which refers to over 90,000 people in Wales who have one of a very specific list of pre-existing and long-term serious health conditions. The impact of their pre-existing, long-term health condition on their immune system puts them at high risk of serious illness if they are exposed to Covid-19.

Consequently, the list we have provided to supermarkets has been determined by clinical condition and is not age-specific. Therefore, although Welsh Government has not provided a specific list of all over 70's in Wales to supermarkets, there is a significant number of over 70's who will fall into this category due to being at a very high risk of severe illness from Covid-19 due to a serious underlying health issue.

Those shielding individuals who are in receipt of a letter advising them to stay at home who cannot use their usual means of sourcing food or cannot obtain support from family, friends or neighbours can receive help by contacting the local authority number in the CMO letter. Welsh Government has agreed a solution for Wales based on weekly food boxes being delivered to people's doors direct from wholesalers if they do not have support. This is

similar to the UK Government offer in England, but rather than requiring an individual to register, we ask them to contact their local authority to request a weekly food box.

In addition, Welsh Government has worked urgently with supermarkets to prioritise on-line orders and home deliveries for shielding people. Data has now been provided to all eight of the supermarkets who offer online delivery services in Wales and shielded individuals in Wales now have access to these priority delivery slots.

To ensure all high risk patients are contacted, GPs have been provided with a list of those who have been sent letters to check against their known patients. They will contact any additional high risk patients not identified to provide the advice outlined by the Chief Medical Officer.

Any additional high risk patients identified by GPs will also have their details passed to the relevant local authority and supermarkets.

You can find more details on the shielding process at the below link:

<https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html#section-40103>

The second part of your request refers to such a list having been created in England. Although we cannot directly comment on the UK Government's policies, I have found the below information that is publically available that you may find helpful. In addition, you may wish to submit a freedom of information request directly to UK Government in order to clarify the information you refer to.

"A significant number of people in England have been identified by the NHS as being the most clinically vulnerable and therefore at higher risk of severe illness if they contract coronavirus. The NHS has written to many of these individuals asking them to shield themselves at home and minimise non-essential contact with others, and giving them instructions of how to register on a Government website if they need support getting essential food supplies.

If you have received this letter and registered on the Government website and requested essential food supplies (and have been assessed as having no other means of accessing food), you will be eligible for a Government food parcel to be delivered to your home. The Government is working to deliver as many as possible as soon as possible. Your information will be also be passed to food retailers to prioritise you for home delivery slots. If you think you should have received a letter but haven't had one, then you should contact your GP.

You may not fall into this category of being clinically vulnerable but you are vulnerable in other ways and in need of support getting essential food supplies. The Government is working to identify these individuals as soon as possible, and is working with volunteer groups, local authorities and food retailers to help support those individuals with getting food supplies."

More details of the UK Government's approach can be found at the below link:

<https://deframedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/21/daily-update-on-the-coronavirus-response/>

We are wholly committed in Wales to providing support to all of those who need it including those who have not been classified as clinically extremely vulnerable. All of us have a part to play in supporting our communities and in particular in helping those who are vulnerable due to underlying health issues, older people and those who are isolated and without any form of support.

On 22 March, the First Minister launched a new campaign focusing on the small things we can do to help. “Looking Out for Each Other” provides practical guidance about everyday tasks that can be done safely, such as collecting a neighbour’s prescription or staying in touch by a phone call to ease any feelings of loneliness or isolation.

<https://gov.wales/first-minister-launches-looking-out-each-other-campaign-wales>

A new online hub – gov.wales/safehelp – was launched also on 22 March and includes a ‘helping hand’ card, which can be downloaded and put through the letterboxes of neighbours, offering them help.

On 23 March, Age Cymru launched its daily “Check-in-and-Chat” service for those aged over 70 who live alone. The initiative aims to provide some reassurances to older people, answer basic queries, link them to local services and support or if the caller wants, just simply to have a chat. Accessing the service can be done by phoning the Age Cymru advice number on 08000 223 444 or emailing enquiries@agecymru.org.uk.

Across Wales we have seen communities pull together during this unprecedented challenge. It is important others follow their example, looking out for each other and staying safe.

As stated at the beginning of this letter, we do not hold the information you request and therefore consider this request to be closed.

Yours sincerely,