

## **P-05-1122 Allow new adoptive parents to form a support bubble in alert level 4, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 02.03.21**

Dear Mr Drakeford,

First of all we want to thank you for your letter clarifying your position and explaining that we are one of many groups that come under the compassionate grounds section of the lockdown rules. This is useful for us to know and we will be able to seek some support now that those rules have been clarified.

Unfortunately we are still extremely disappointed. In your letter you explain that you feel that the provision of compassionate grounds are 'sufficiently flexible to enable anyone who feels they are in need of help during this time to seek assistance which includes newly adopted families in need of support,' however, we as a community feel that this is very dismissive of us as new parents who have become new parents during an impossibly difficult time.

On Saturday you announced that birth parents of children under the age of one will be allowed a support bubble. We would like to ask why this new rule was not inclusive of adoptive parents.

As we are sure you are aware, most adopters become new parents to children who are over the age of one or who turn one relatively soon into their placement. My son turned one, four days after he came to live with me in June last year. Prior to this we had had our introductions delayed by 8 weeks, having to skype call our son 3 times a week instead of meeting him, we had to isolate for 3 weeks before we were able to meet him, not leaving the house for any reason at all, while also preparing to bring home a new baby. Once he moved in we were then faced with parenting our newly adopted one year old child during a global pandemic with absolutely no support. Eight months down the line, we sat and watched your announcement on Saturday, stating that you understand the isolation and difficulties that new birth parents face at home with a new baby. We were deeply saddened. My story is far from unique and I know many many other adopters who have been through equally as difficult a journey only to be told they are not eligible for support due to their children being over the age of one.

Adoption is a difficult journey and during it we are told endlessly by social workers, how ESSENTIAL it is to have support, especially in the first year but also beyond. I am sure you are aware of this after speaking to the social worker who initially responded to me explaining that we were not entitled to support bubbles given the risk you felt was posed of us 'bubble hopping' We are not interested in 'bubble hopping' nor are we asking to be able to break or bend the lockdown rules. What we are asking for is equality and recognition. We have been forgotten throughout the pandemic and this has been made even more apparent since your announcement on Saturday.

We are aware that many people have been left disadvantaged due to the pandemic but the rule that you announced on Saturday has specifically excluded us as a minority group. We would like to know why? We have the same trials as new birth parents.. I would actually argue we face MORE challenges due to the additional strains that come with adopting a child who may or may not have experienced previous traumas in their lives. We are aware that people are encouraged to apply to adopt in Wales due to the shortage of adopters available to give homes to the many children in need across the country. Yet we are discriminated against and forgotten during our time of need.

Your letter in response to my petition would have been very welcomed if it had been accompanied with us being included in the new rule you announced on Saturday. Unfortunately, the letter

accompanied with us being excluded from the new ruling has simply highlighted further how we are so frequently forgotten and dismissed as adoptive families.

We as a community urge you to reconsider this position and to immediately amend the new ruling to include new adoptive families.

Kind regards,

### **Annex 1**

Dear Mr Drakeford,

I question why the need to specifically identify one group (new parents of children under one) that can form a support bubble when they too are surely covered by the compassionate argument? I suggest that the legislation is deliberately not specifically clear on this and that is why Welsh govt have now taken the step to be crystal clear for one specific group? We, as new adopters, have been abiding by the rule that we cannot form a support bubble based in advice given but now the implication is that we can, in fact we can seek support from wherever we choose...if that's the case then we want this spelled out clearly under the same legislation as new birth parents...we are not an add-on, we are facing the same challenges, and more....

Kind regards,