



David Rees AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29th September 2015

Dear Mr Rees,

I'm writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee.

As you may be aware, at Crohn's and Colitis UK we campaign to help those living with Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis (together classed as Inflammatory Bowel Disease) achieve a better quality of life, improve support services and increase funding to find a cure to this devastating disease. We also work with local support groups across the UK to provide peer support for those living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) and liaise closely with patient panels which work with their local IBD service and improve the delivery of local IBD services.

Symptoms of IBD include abdominal pain, weight loss, diarrhoea, tenesmus (constant urge to have a bowel movement), and severe fatigue. This means that those with IBD need constant access to a toilet both due to the frequency, immediacy and urgency of bowel movements.

These debilitating symptoms are accompanied by a continuous anxiety about suddenly needing the toilet and having very little time to find one. Experiencing an episode of incontinence in public is each person's worst nightmare. For many individuals, the result is a devastating impact on their ability to engage in activities away from home such as going to work, shopping or socialising.

This is why Crohn's and Colitis UK warmly welcomes the Welsh Government's efforts to encourage access to public toilets through the Public Health (Wales) Bill which your committee is currently scrutinising. This will be the first time in the UK where every local authority must have a local toilet strategy in place which may help improve access to toilets for those in need.

Whilst this is of course welcome we at Crohn's and Colitis do have some concerns that the Bill misses the opportunity to be stronger and ensure compliance with the new toilets strategies which would have a greater impact on improving access to public toilets. We would very much welcome the opportunity if possible to discuss these with you before your Committee finalises its conclusions.

I understand that you will be extremely busy but I was wondering whether you might have any availability to meet with representatives from Crohn's and Colitis UK to discuss our concerns and how the Bill could possibly be further improved to ensure access to safe and clean toilets for those living with IBD, which of course also benefit many others in society.

I would be most appreciative if you could ask your office to please contact [REDACTED] [REDACTED], our Policy and Public Affairs Officer, on [REDACTED] or please phone [REDACTED], in order to set up a suitable opportunity.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration on this matter and very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

David Barker
Chief Executive