



19th September 2023

Dear Prime Minister,

The last three years have taught us more than we ever want to know about the deeply damaging impact of separation and isolation in health and care settings. The support of a loved one is not an optional extra, it is a central part of dignified care.

Removing this vital support has caused pain, misery and harm to people placed in the most vulnerable of situations. It has caused distress, guilt and anxiety for families, especially those denied the opportunity to say goodbye to loved ones.

We urge you to ensure this never happens again by taking forward Dan Carden's Care Supporters Bill.

Everyone using health and care services should have the legal right to at least one Care Supporter – a relative or friend to provide practical or emotional support when it is needed.

Recent experience has shown that restrictions have borne hardest on people placed in vulnerable situations including older and disabled people, those affected by dementia, strokes or other cognitive impairments, people with a learning disability or autism, or with mental or physical ill-health.

They often need the support of a family carer to challenge decisions made at care homes or in hospitals. People giving birth, receiving hospital treatment or a diagnosis should always be supported by at least one person of their choice. One day, any of us could need this.

Throughout the pandemic, guidance has proven inadequate. The variability and uncertainty in its application has led to a postcode lottery. It is unacceptable that one hospital ward can welcome family carers whilst another ward in the same hospital shuts them out.

This situation was exacerbated by, but is not exclusive to, the coronavirus pandemic.

However, many families experienced separation from relatives prior to the pandemic, and still do today. This can take place in care homes, hospitals, mental health units or rehabilitation centres.

While the Government recognise this is a problem, their recently announced consultation relates to visiting and not to a legal right to a care supporter at all times.

As a society, do we give the right to state or private institutions – such as hospitals and care homes – to deny us contact with family because we are in receipt of care, or do we



believe that we should keep our right to maintain contact with loved ones regardless of health and care needs?

We firmly believe that we should make a clear choice for the latter and enshrine that right in law.

Yours sincerely

Dan Carden MP, Liverpool Walton

Tracey Crouch MP, Chatham and Aylesford

Daisy Cooper MP, St Albans

Liz Saville-Roberts MP, Dwyfor Meirionnydd

Judith Cummins MP, Bradford South

Sarah Olney MP, Richmond Park

Mohammed Yasin MP, Bedford

Wera Hobhouse MP, Bath

Kim Johnson MP, Liverpool Riverside

Caroline Lucas MP, Brighton Pavilion

Zarah Sultana MP, Coventry South

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