



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein Cyf/ Our ref ATISN 14999

5 May 2021

Dear

**Complaint in respect of Request for Information – reference ATISN 14999 – COVID in gyms**

In your emails of 19 February 2021, you requested the following information:

- 1. A copy of the scientific evidence that supported the First Minister's statement of 18 February regarding the COVID-19 transmission risks associated with opening gyms in Wales.*
- 2. Data/evidence that proves community spread of any variant of Coronavirus within gyms in Wales, also with supporting evidence/ genome sequencing to demonstrate positive test results for variant B.1.1.7 directly linked to community spread in gyms in Wales.*
- 3. What financial package is in place to support this forced prolonged shutdown.*

We responded on 15 April, drawing your attention to a Technical Advisory Cell (TAC) paper that identified the potential routes and risks of transmission associated with activities in indoor exercise facilities. This was our response to your first and second questions. In response to your third question, we provided (in an annex) a detailed breakdown of the financial support that had been available since December 2020.

In your email of 15 April, you requested an Internal Review of your case; specifically in relation to question 2. I have conducted an Internal Review of your case and I am satisfied that it was handled correctly, and that Welsh Government has provided you with all the recorded information it holds that was captured by your request.

I considered your complaint in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information](#) which is available by post on request or via the internet.

When we receive a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the information that we hold in respect of that request is already in the public domain then the information is generally exempt from release under FOIA section 21 (Information accessible to applicant by other means) and in such instances we direct the requester to where the information is available. In this case, the information we held was published in a TAC paper, so our response provided the URL (web link) to that paper.



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In your request for an Internal Review, you complained that the link we provided was to a document included in your original request. I have looked through your original request, and all the other correspondence on this case, and I could not find any previous reference to the TAC paper. Therefore I think it is likely that my colleague who provided the original response (on 15 April) would not have known that you were already aware of the document. In the circumstances I consider that it was appropriate for her to provide a link to the TAC paper in her response.

If you have not already seen it, you may be interested to read the following paper on the B.1.1.7 variant which has been prepared by the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG), and published by SAGE:  
[NERVTAG paper on COVID-19 variant of concern B.1.1.7 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94222/nervtag-paper-on-covid-19-variant-of-concern-b.1.1.7-2021-02-11.pdf)

The following update on the B.1.1.7 variant has also been published: [NERVTAG: Update note on B.1.1.7 severity, 11 February 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94222/nervtag-update-note-on-b.1.1.7-severity-11-february-2021.pdf)

I appreciate that these papers are not directly relevant to your request as they do not concern the transmission or spread of the virus in the specific context of gyms, but you may find them interesting insofar as they discuss the risks associated with the B.1.1.7 variant.

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745  
Fax: 01625 524 510  
Email: [casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Stephen Probert CEng FIET MloD  
Deputy Director of Operations  
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