

guidance, written with the adult care sector in mind, does not recognise the context within which children's homes operate, and actually prevents them from maintaining a safe family environment.

While I appreciate that none of these decisions falls directly under your responsibility, they all result from the application to children of public health guidance designed for adults. The Chief Executive of Public Health England, Duncan Selbie, has informed me that the decision to use the same guidance for both adults and children was taken by Cabinet, based on SAGE advice.

This decision appears to prevent other public bodies, such as Public Health England, from tailoring their guidance in order to reflect the specific needs of children. The result is that children, while at lower risk from COVID-19, are put at much greater risk of other physical or mental health issues.

I am therefore writing to ask:

- what consideration SAGE has given, in producing its advice, to the differential susceptibility of children to COVID-19 compared with adults;
- whether SAGE has explored the potential for differential social distancing requirements for adults and children; and, if so, whether it has provided this advice to ministers;
- whether SAGE advice recommends treating children in the same way as adults in terms of social distancing requirements; and, if so, what the reasons for this are.

I am requesting a response to this letter by noon on 7 July. Your response, as well as my letter to you, may be published by my Office, although I am happy to have further conversations with your officials about that.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Longfield OBE

Children's Commissioner for England

cc. Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education
Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Chair, Education Select Committee
Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England

Children's Commissioner for England: [Anne Longfield OBE](#)