

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 23rd June 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 22nd June 2020, with a representative from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) present for the open part of the meeting. CSGB chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. Ministry of Justice update.

The MOJ informed DMAG that MHCLG is developing an exit strategy to stand down the LRF emergency PPE drops and is looking to understand the impacts of this on departments. It is specifically interested in the effects of this on PPE for court officers and funeral directors/mortuaries. It has asked for a response to the following questions:

- If the drops stop will you be in a position to source PPE for these sectors through your central procurement?
- Will there be any major difficulties in sourcing PPE for these sectors?
- Total sector use per week (by item)
- Total amount distributed via LRFs by week, by item.
- The proportion of workforce's total weekly usage which comes from LRF
- Amount/proportion of total PPE (by item) offered by DHSC to wholesalers which is not accepted
- Total requests for PPE to the NSDR helpline by item and by week
- Where each sector obtains the PPE it does not source from LRF stocks
- Alternative departmental managed distribution channel?

DMAG felt that the NAFD informed the meeting that 20% of its members had relied on LRF's for PPE at the height of the crisis. They were not certain of the percentage of PPE that the 20% had obtained. It was felt that information required would be better gleaned from the LRF's themselves as they would be better placed to have the exact data.



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MOJ raised the question of additional costs of COVID-19 to Local Governments – for example overtime, extra training for staff etc. It was thought that the LGA should be approached for the information.

2. Vaccinations for the funeral sector

DHSC has published an independent report on Vaccination and Immunisation advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccinations (published 18 June).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi/interim-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination>

The report has some interim advice and states that the following groups would be classed as priority for the vaccination:

- frontline health and social care workers
- those at increased risk of serious disease and death from COVID-19 infection stratified according to age and risk factors.

The representative from SAIF asked the question if Funeral Directors and other funeral professionals were to be included in the frontline health and social care workers.

MOJ will seek clarification from Jane Crossley DHSC and report back to DMAG. If needed DMAG will provide supporting evidence as to why the funeral sector should be included as frontline workers.

3. Notes

DMAG members had not had chance to read the notes as yet. We will add to our next meeting.



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DMAG closed meeting

1. Items for future meetings with Cabinet Office/Scottish Government.

It was agreed that the interim Vaccination and Immunisation advice should be added to our list for this week's CO meeting.

2. Safe Funeral Protocol (JL)

DMAG was joined by Morgan Harris, Policy and Legislation Manager, NAFD for this item. NAFD had been approached by the Co-op who had been working with the Church of England on establishing a Safe Funeral Protocol for when churches opened up again for funerals. Morgan had been working closely with Co-op on behalf of NAFD on the protocol but was now seeking input from DMAG on the draft guidance.

Not all members of DMAG had yet read the document but initial thoughts were that the Church's Funeral Group would be the best to advise on the re-opening of churches for funerals. DMAG had already issued guidance for funerals in cemeteries and crematoria. Guidance had also been written by DMAG for the use of limousines.

Initial thoughts on the document were the use of face masks in churches – surely this should be a voluntary option?

There was no mention of carrying the coffin into church or the use of wheeled biers /trestles?

DMAG members are encouraged to put some thoughts together and feedback to Morgan.

3 AOB Round Robin

Nothing to add.

