

Deceased Management Advisory Group

UPDATE 6th July 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 6th July 2020 with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) present for the open part of the meeting.

1. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE UPDATE

The MOJ explained that whilst every endeavour was made last week for timely revised guidance on **'Managing Funerals in England'**; the clearance procedures on policy and the wording of the legislation meant that the new legislation were released late on Friday 3rd July.

The MOJ forwarded a weblink of how the lockdown in Leicester was managed and understood that LRF's would manage the guidelines for any further lockdowns.

The NAFD made the point that the absence of revised guidance being published to accompany the new legislation, meant that the position of who can attend a funeral was unclear, i.e. the guidance still referred to the old legislation of attendance being restricted to close relatives, householders etc.

APCC suggested DMAG produce a succinct summary, once clarity is gained.

Test & Trace

The ICCM asked what was the latest DHSC guidance.

The NAFD and SAIF had members asking why Funeral Directors (FDs) should be responsible for collecting names at funerals.

A discussion took place and the MOJ would investigate this further on behalf of DMAG. Their interim advice was that a) Check with the local Health Protection Teams, for any specific local guidelines b) the FD, produces a Name Sheet for the Funeral which the client/applicant takes responsibility for the collection of names and holds these for 21 days after the funeral. If the applicant/client are unable, they could nominate one or two others to collect the names. One name from a household or family group (rather than all names); and the FD ensures they know which staff

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operate on a given funeral, in case Test and Trace, activate a tracking protocol for a C-19 infection.

It is acknowledged by the MOJ, that there are conundrums with this process, or knowing who turns up at a burial funeral, or if a person says they are at a funeral, and do not turn up, or vice versa can be problematic.

ACTION: MOJ to investigate clarity on the guidance with Test and Trace with holders in Government.

N Ireland revised Guidelines on viewing and embalming 3rd July 2020

SAIF raised the concern that we face confusion across the four nations of the UK, with differing infection control guidelines by Chief Medical Officers in PHNI, PHS, PHE and PHW.

ScotGov were handling complaints by clients where FD's had not permitted viewings due to C-19 and potentially supporting such complaints, when FD's were instructed to exercise the greatest care in C-19 deaths.

The revised PHNI guidance insists that embalming should not take place with C-19, or until it is known a deceased has not had C-19; and that no viewings should take place in C-19 cases.

The NAFD also noted the guidance on the use of face coverings at funerals is part of the PHNI guidelines.

ACTION: NAFD asked to invite to DMAG: PHE, PHNI, PHS, PHW to discuss how we align these positions for funeral directors.

2. NOTES

No comments or questions from these.

DMAG CLOSED MEETING

1. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS WITH CABINET OFFICE / SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The NAFD explained the question who can attend a funeral requires clarity. We know 30 mourners, but the offences had now been dropped and FDs asking for clarity.

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2. LESSON LEARNED

The FBCA explained that the document had been redacted, and proposed a review by all members of DMAG by COB Wednesday 8th July. Also, it was accepted that this document in its final form should be professionally designed.

21-27,000 excess deaths could be anticipated in the Autumn with another surge of C-19, and if the winter flu occurs to, the death management process will face extreme pressure – how do we prepare?

ACTION: Review Lessons Learned by DMAG, COB Wed. 8th July.

3. DMAG CONFIDENTIALITY

It was reported that correspondence had been sent to PHE refuting the allegation made of a leak of information.
DMAG to be copied for info only.

4. LOCAL LOCKDOWNS

The NAFD remarked that in the large chain FD's staff would be seconded to any area where pressure of a lockdown occurred.

SAIF mentioned that the recommendation to the Cabinet Office, is to develop specialist 'rapid response teams' to support the death management process where lockdowns occur to fast track learnings across the UK.

5. AOB ROUND ROBIN

The APCC proposed if we do not have clear guidance on 'Managing Funerals in England' by Wednesday, this is submitted on the table of contents to the Cabinet Office for discussion on Thursday 9th July.

ACTION: The ICCM will Chair Thursday 9th July's DMAG meeting at 4pm