

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 27th August 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 27th August 2020, with a representative from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Scottish Government (SG) and a representative from Northern Ireland (NI) for the open part of the meeting. The FBCA chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. MoJ update

The FBCA representative took the opportunity to reiterate concerns that Registrars Part C when sent electronically did not indicate the Registration District to which it should be returned. The MoJ representative advised the meeting that the General Register Office (GRO) were in the process of preparing revised guidance for Registrars and the issue concerning the return of Part C's will be addressed then.

The MoJ representative explained that discussions are currently taking place on guidance concerning the numbers attending funerals/weddings. In particular, is the minister, celebrant, funeral director or chapel attendant one of the 30 permitted to attend or in addition to the suggested limit? DMAG will be advised of the result of the discussions at a later meeting

The future engagement by the MoJ with the sector through the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group (BCAG) was discussed. The paper presented by DMAG was welcomed by the MoJ as a basis to commence their considerations. A date for the next meeting of BCAG will not be set until the views of those who attend have been sought and the MoJ have decided on an appropriate format for moving forward.

The next meeting of DMAG on the 3rd September will be the last for the current representative of the MoJ, who will attend and introduce his successor.

2. SG update

The representative of the Scottish Government confirmed that the cap for attending funerals in Scotland was 20 and that ministers, celebrants, funeral directors and chapel attendants were not included.

However, anecdotal concerns had been expressed that the cap was being exceeded on an increasing number of occasions. Scottish Government were unsure how widespread the issue had become. DMAG members agreed to share any intelligence they had from their members on the matter.



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3. NI update

The representative from the Northern Ireland Executive confirmed that there was no set limit on attendance at funerals, individual service providers had to set their own limit based on a risk assessment and social distancing. If the funeral included paying respects in the home, there is a limit of 10, from up to 4 households and including clergy, officiant and funeral director.

Revised guidance was likely to be published imminently.

DMAG Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting

The notes were agreed as an accurate record which could be published on the DMAG website.

2. Items for future meetings with Cabinet Office/Devolved Governments

It was agreed that the following items should be asked of the CO:

- Can the CO advise who will be leading test & trace, if PHE is replaced. It is important that any successor organisation has close ties to the death care sector and DMAG.
- The position concerning financial assistance for funeral firms, especially in the light of increase of UC applicants and possible second wave of C-19.
- What is happening with LRF's, are there any proposals to increase consistency?

3. Draft letter to the CMA

The representative for the APCC had spoken with the CMA and explained the position of the DMAG members. The response from the CMA was neutral. It was agreed to amend the letter to show all DMAG representative contact details to enable the CMA to contact individuals should they wish to do so.

4. Cabinet Office (CO) draft on reducing funeral delays

It was unclear if the slide prepared by the CO was confidential. DMAG felt that to provide a detailed response it was important that the slide should be shared with their members. It was agreed that the representative of the NAFD would contact the CO to ascertain if the slide could be shared more widely.

5. AOB Round robin

SAIF had a question relating to the viewing of a body where the Coroner had ticked 'high risk'. In view of the complexity of the question it was agreed to circulate it amongst DMAG Members.

The next meeting would be chaired by the FFMA representative, followed by each representative in alphabetical order.



FBCA
Federation of Burial
& Cremation Authorities



The Cremation Society