

# Deceased Management

## Advisory Group

### Video Conference

Notes 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**The members of DMAG held a video conference on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Scottish Government (SG) and Public Advisors.**

DMAG Wider Consultation 4.00 – 4.45pm

#### 1. MoJ Update

The MoJ representative, following a discussion at an earlier DMAG meeting, had checked on the current position regarding the use of plastics in the construction of coffins as an alternative to zinc linings and a proposal to 'shrink wrap' bodies. It was not currently something the ministry was considering, and it would have to be worked through with Defra because of the potential impact on the environment. In addition, due to the current pandemic it was unclear if there would be the political will to follow up these items.

The MoJ representative was asked if any further progress had been made on the regulatory matters, or if this has been put on hold due to the pandemic. It was confirmed that these work streams had not been forgotten and the Code of Practice which they had been working on was almost ready for publication.

It was confirmed that the 'funeral sector' has been designated a 'critical workforce' in relation to the Test and Trace scheme. As a result, if a member of the sector is contacted by the test and trace team and they feel the advice given is disproportionate to their level of exposure it can be reviewed by a 'Tier 1' member of the team who is medically qualified.

#### 2. Scottish Government Update

The representative from the Scottish Government informed the meeting that with the rate of infection increasing there would be no further easing of the lockdown in Scotland. Instead, government departments are using the learning gained to date to prepare for the winter and any possible second wave.

DMAG Meeting 4.45 – 5.30pm

#### 1. All Party Parliamentary Group on Funerals and Bereavement

DMAG received a presentation on ideas as to how to reinvigorate the All Party Parliamentary Group on Funerals and Bereavement from Public Affairs advisors JBP Associates.



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## 2. Notes from previous meetings 21<sup>st</sup> September

It was agreed that these could be published on the DMAG website.

## 3. Items for future meetings with Cabinet Office/Devolved Governments

The items previously raised would be presented at the next meeting of the Cabinet Office for discussion.

## 4. Sector Portal

The FBCA and ICCM had received a proposal from OpusXenta to launch a free online portal enabling crematoria across the UK to provide visibility of cremation slot availability to all funeral directors. It was recognised that as this software would be separate to the crematoria's own booking system all details would have to be keyed in twice, something which is likely to be a barrier to adoption.

DMAG members felt it would be necessary to receive a demonstration of the system to judge its suitability for their members.

As OpusXenta was in the process of joining the DMAG organisations they would be able to promote the portal through the normal membership channels.

## 5. AOB Round Robin

The FFMA representative reported that there had been no supply problems with coffins entering the UK from Europe or the US. Coffin suppliers are starting to increase stock levels to meet any increased demand. However, the range of increased stock may be limited to the more popular ranges.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 28th September. The Cremation Society representative gave her apologies for the meeting. The meeting will be chaired by the ICCM.

