

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 8th October 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 8th October, with a representative from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and Public Health England (PHE) present for the open part of the meeting. SAIF chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. **Ministry of Justice update.**

The MOJ advised that the BCAG reforms were still being reviewed and the APCC wish to alert the MOJ to consider not only reforms to BCAG, but with the CMA final report and Law Commission review, that it was apt to integrate these efficiently together.

The MOJ are now aware that the CMA final report is in December 2020 and the UK Government has 90 days in which to respond to their recommendations. The MOJ comments that primary legislation could take 18-24 months and/or the CMA could use its own power for orders simultaneously.

For PPE supplies, the MOJ wanted to know what the stock levels of suppliers and funeral directors was like. The NAFD and SAIF confirmed that suppliers, we understand are well stocked and we are advising funeral directors to ensure good stock too.

The DMAG sector are keen that the VAT exemption on PPE is extended beyond 31st October 2020 and have asked this via the MOJ and CO.

2. **Public Health England (PHE)**

PHE hoped that the guidance on exemptions for mourners self-isolating or COVID-19 positive would be signed off today. The sign off process had included the Legal department and the Secretary of State.

PHE advised that the regulation is not changing as DMAG had made strong pleas to the CO that this could put at risk not only funeral staff but diminish capacity through closures of the death care system.

Whilst the guidance directs those exempt to watch the funeral virtually, it is their right to attend if they so wish and the Government did not want any mourners with known symptoms or self-isolating to have a criminal conviction.

The ICCM has forwarded an email from the CO to clarify the legal position where a Local Authority has closed their crematorium due to the risks.



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The NAFD highlighted that Union's in the larger funeral services and public cemeteries and crematoria may well direct their members to take action against this risk.

The FBCA highlighted that the potential impact of infection clusters at a crematorium could lead to closures and severely interrupt capacity.

The FFMA posed the matter of how many mourners would self-declare symptoms, a positive test or self-isolating for fear of discrimination.

DMAG closed meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed, and these can now be placed on the DMAG website.

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

The three tier lockdown system to be discussed by CO next week.

3. Regulation and Guidance (ICCM/APCC)

The CO requested that DMAG offer guidance on best practice to mitigate the risks with mourners who attend funerals who are COVID-19 positive or self-isolating.

The NAFD have Jeremy Field; SAIF will have Paul Allcock and the ICCM/FBCA/APCC will select competent persons to advise from the private and public sector crematoria for Monday's DMAG meeting.

The NAFD asked for clarity on the legal position of a Local Authority closing and the ICCM will ask the Local Government Association for their input.

APCC recommended DMAG consider writing to the Minister, to be discussed next week.

4. AOB Round Robin.

JBP to attend Monday's meeting re the APPG.

FFMA to chair the next meeting – Monday 12 October 2020.

