

Deceased Management Advisory Group

UPDATE 26 OCTOBER 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 26 October 2020, with representatives from Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Scottish Government (SG) and Welsh Government (SC) present for the open part of the meeting. Apologies were received from the Cremation Society.

1. MoJ UPDATE

The MoJ representative reported that a number of commissions from CCS are expected by Thursday, one of which may concern PPE. DMAG may therefore be asked for a view. The MoJ representative thought the proposed cremation booking portal was good in that it would generate good intelligence on cremation capacity. APCC asked if their email from a funeral director regarding infection and isolation had been received and it was confirmed that it had been and was on their to do list.

2. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATE

The SG had circulated the proposed Framework last week indicating the 5 levels that will be in force across Scotland from 2nd November. It is proposed that at the lowest level, Level 0, up to 50 people can attend a funeral and a wake, and that at levels 1-4 inclusive up to 20 people can attend a funeral and a wake. It was felt that this consistency of approach would assist in preventing delays to funerals or funerals being booked in different areas with fewer restrictions. Level 0 will be exceptional, and will only be applied to those areas with no Covid-19 cases. ScotGov is addressing a concern that where Level 0 applies, out of area funerals could take place from a higher tier.

3. WELSH GOVERNMENT UPDATE

The SC discussed their current two week 'firebreak' lockdown, which is due to end on 9th November. There is currently no statutory limit on the numbers who can attend a funeral, with this being down to the size and circumstances of the venue. No wakes can be held during the firebreak lockdown. Ministers are currently looking at what life after the firebreak will bring.



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DMAG CLOSED MEETING

1. NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting have not yet been circulated.

2. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS WITH CABINET OFFICE/DEVOLVED GOVERNMENTS

As well as the usual list of topics for the Cabinet Office meeting on Thursday, a question on the revised Guidance on Managing a Funeral will be asked. The Guidance states that anyone who should be self-isolating but wishes to attend the funeral of a close family member should (amongst other things) wear a surgical grade Type IIR face mask or higher grade. Who is responsible for sourcing/providing such a mask?

3. NATIONAL BOOKING PORTAL

Following the presentation from Opus Xenta about their proposed cremation booking portal, DMAG agreed that they support the concept and would give it general endorsement in terms of principle, ie in providing useful data to track cremation capacity. Each cremation authority or company would be advised to carry out their own due diligence and assessment before committing to the portal.

4. CMA

After a long discussion it was agreed that APCC would draft a note to send to the CMA from DMAG to ask:

- What data is required and for what intended purposes
- If they will consider a voluntary arrangement rather than putting some members under a statutory duty to provide data
- If they will have a conversation with DMAG to design a suitable system of data collection that doesn't place undue strain on businesses and authorities



FBCA
Federation of Burial
& Cremation Authorities



ICCM
Institute of Cemetery and
Crematorium Management



The Cremation Society

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- And to note that now is not the right time for new monitoring processes when priorities are to meet high demand for funerals, burials and cremations due to the pandemic

5. FUNERAL WEBCASTING

APCC had circulated a report from a supplier of audio-visual systems to the sector, which illustrated some much cheaper options for installing web-casting than had been discussed at last week's Cabinet Office meeting. The individual associations can now decide how to use this information to inform their membership should they wish to do so.

6. AOB AND ROUND ROBIN

SAIF reported that a member of staff of one of their members had tested positive for Covid-19. Following the confirmation they contacted Test and Trace, and were asked to provide contact details of those they had come into contact with only in the 48 hours before the test, not the seven days that it was believed was required.

APCC reported that members of the funeral firm that had been tested positive for Covid-19 had been to a crematorium 5 times in one day prior to the test. The Crematorium felt no action was necessary for their staff as the funeral directors had been there for less than 15 minutes on each occasion.

FFMA gave their apologies for the meeting on Thursday 29th October. NAFD will chair the meeting.

