

Deceased Management Advisory Group

UPDATE 19th November 2020

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 19th November 2020, with representatives from the Welsh and Scottish Governments and the Ministry of Justice present for the open part of the meeting.

1. Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Consideration is being given to how the funeral sector can access PPE from LRFs when normal supply routes fail to deliver. Criteria for access needs to be drawn up.

DMAG were asked to provide the MoJ with information about areas where interaction with LRFs was not as good as it could have been in the first wave.

The long form version of the PHE/DHSC Guidance on Managing a Funeral is still going through clearance.

DMAG were asked to report any issues with cremation Form 4 to the MoJ.

DMAG felt the current system of death certification/cremation paperwork was working well and showed good cooperation between registrars and other agencies.

2. Senedd Cymru

The guidance is still being revised and is currently with the legal team for clarification of a couple of key issues. It will be released as soon as possible.

3. Scottish Government

From 6pm on Friday 20th November, eleven areas across Scotland will be placed into the highest level, level 4. There are currently no areas in level 0, although some of the islands are close and have had some restrictions lifted. The number of attendees at both funerals and wakes remains at 20 across all levels. Travel restrictions are due to be introduced, but these will not affect funeral directors needing to travel between areas, and there will be exceptions for people attending a funeral.



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DMAG will remind their members of the 20 attendee limit to support messaging from the SG.

4. Crematorium Availability Reporting System (CARS)

The MoJ had discussed the CARS with CCS. Although they found the information useful, they felt the document was too high level.

MoJ asked what was to happen next. The background to the approach regarding CARS was explained. It was felt that the various Government departments could assist by being specific about their requirements for data/information so that DMAG could go back to the software companies with a more detailed brief.

SG had passed the CARS brief on to their resilience colleagues and will chase their response.

5. Cremation Society Annual Stats Survey

Each year the Cremation Society conducts a survey of crematoria in the UK, asking a variety of questions. It is a big effort to compile and process the data, and normally involves chasing those crematoria that do not respond by the due date. It would be helpful if the survey could receive the backing of the MoJ and other relevant Government departments to add some authority.

A draft of the survey will be sent to DMAG for consultation before being released.

The APCC asked if the following could be included:

- a) *Direct Cremation*: The addition of a single column in the form of +/- % to indicate the difference between the latest and the previous year, as used in Variance Analysis in a set of accounts.
- b) *Changes in the Average Revenue per Cremation*: It is intended that exactly the same format be used and as the NAFD have already agreed to survey their members in respect of the changes in the average revenue per funeral, NAFD and APCC will try and come up with as uniform a definition as possible for Monday's meeting.



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6. Logistical Flexibility of Crematorium Staff

At the Cabinet Office Meeting earlier in the day, those present had been asked to comment on the degree of flexibility that they believed they have in respect of the deployment of staff. Dignity and Westerleigh have increased their workforces and have plans in place to move staff between sites as necessary. The Cabinet Office felt that local authorities may find such measures more difficult to implement; the topic may be discussed at next week's Cabinet Office meeting.

Closed DMAG Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting

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

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

The list of items previously raised will be represented to the Cabinet Office. CSGB raised the issue of first call funeral workers not being in the priority category for a vaccine. Care home residents and workers are a priority, so funeral workers who go to different premises and are at risk of catching and spreading the virus should also be prioritised. CSGB will put a note together to take to CO raising this issue.

3. Vaccine Storage

APCC raised the possibility that funeral directors and crematoria with refrigeration may be asked to help store coronavirus vaccines, which need to be stored at very low temperatures. DMAG felt that this wouldn't be appropriate.

4. AOB Round Robin

DMAG agreed that if any member was unable to attend the weekly CO meeting, another member would raise any issues for them.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 23rd November. NAFD will chair the meeting.



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