



Funerals and Bereavement

Press Release

APPG for Funerals and Bereavement calls for extension to VAT exemption and for funeral workers to be treated as priority for COVID-19 vaccine

The All- Party Parliamentary Group for Funerals and Bereavement has written to the Treasury and to the Department of Health and Social Care to call for a VAT exemption to be reinstated for PPE and for those who work in the funeral industry to be treated as a priority as the vaccinations for COVID-19 begin to be rolled out.

A VAT exemption on PPE had been in place for much of the year but ended on 31 October. This has caused significant pressure on business, particularly small businesses, which make up most of the funeral sector. These businesses are not in a position to bulk buy and store the levels of PPE that will be required across the entire winter, and so will be required to regularly re-order, which means they will be subject to the huge variations in price and supply that we have seen in recent months.

The APPG for Funerals and Bereavement is calling on the Government to extend the exemption until at least March 2021.

Sir John Hayes MP, Chairman of the APPG for Funerals and Bereavement said, 'The temporary VAT exemption on PPE during the first wave of the pandemic provided essential support at a time of increasing demand and saved many firms significant VAT costs and allowed them to procure the essential PPE the funeral industry needed. Those pressures are still being felt and support is needed until next year at least when the situation can be reviewed against what we all hope will be an improving public health situation.'

The APPG has also written to the new Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment, Nadhim Zahawi MP, to ask that funeral sector workers who are working on the frontline be treated as a priority for a COVID-19 vaccination. Frontline funeral operatives, mortuary technicians and embalmers, are amongst the first to be called upon when a death occurs and therefore have to attend and regularly enter private homes, hospitals, care homes, and other settings, which puts them at very high-risk of being infected, particularly with the COVID-19 virus.

If funeral staff do become infected there is a high risk of the infection spreading rapidly through the sector, including to crematoria and cemetery staff as well as nursing and care homes. The APPG is therefore asking the Government to ensure that frontline funeral staff are treated as a priority to receive the vaccine and daily testing.

Sir John Hayes MP said, 'We need funeral sector workers to be treated as a priority for COVID-19 vaccinations. Representatives of the UK's funeral industry play an essential role especially at this time of having to manage excess fatalities caused by COVID-19.'

Notes to editors

The members of the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG) are The Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries (APCC); Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA); The Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers Associations (FFMA); The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM); The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD); The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) and; The Cremation Society.

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