

# Deceased Management Advisory Group

## Update 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Scottish Government (SG), the Welsh Senedd (SC) and Northern Ireland Government (NI Gov) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. Apologies were received from the FBCA. SAIF chaired the meeting.

### DMAG Wider Consultation

#### 1. Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Update.

The MOJ queried whether there was a shortage of shrouds. The FFMA had been in correspondence with colleagues in the MOJ to report there was no issue with supplies, the only issue might be if containers are held up at the UK ports.

The MOJ advised the new Lockdown 3.0 arrangements to be announced by the PM later and the revised guidance on managing funerals will be is forthcoming.

#### 2. Welsh Government (SC)

The revised funeral guidance is forthcoming since the whole of Wales are now in Alert Level 4. In Alert Level 4, no funeral wakes are permitted.

The LRFs have recommenced and storage capacity is being monitored with the increase in deaths.

#### 3. Scottish Government (SG)

From 2pm Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January the FM has announced a mainland lockdown. No post funeral teas/receptions are permitted, but the scattering of ashes and stone laying is permitted. Mourner numbers for funerals and post funeral events are limited to 20 people, subject to the venue allowing physical distancing of 2 metres apart.

The SG's regulations are due for publication on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January.



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## 4. Northern Ireland Government (NI Gov)

The NI administration implemented a national lockdown from 26<sup>th</sup> December 2020 for review by 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021. There are no tiers.

A maximum of 25 mourners can attend a funeral service, provided the venue can accommodate the 2 metre physical distancing rule.

No wakes or associated gatherings are permitted. No home services permitted, although the deceased can rest in a household overnight.

The NI Gov guidance was released on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

Importantly, in the new guidance, the person organising the funeral is responsible for providing the list of mourners (attendance list) for mourners over the age of 16. It is understood that the organiser could be the Chief mourner (the bereaved); the Church; or the Funeral Director.

The NAFD asked about the legal responsibilities if the FD was the organiser and had clearly informed the client of the mourner limit, yet at the service mourner numbers were exceeded. Would the FD be held responsible for this, where neither they, nor the Chief mourner, or Church venue can control mourner numbers? The NI Gov advised that they are aware of these intricacies and have kept the definition of organiser open to the three categories to avoid unnecessary legal interventions.

SAIF asked if there was any paperwork revisions for repatriating deceased from GB to NI? There are none to date.

## 5. PHE Green Book Vaccine for Funeral workers.

SAIF asked what counts as a frontline funeral operative in the PHE guidance for the C-19 vaccine. The MOJ and the Cabinet Office had not seen the PHE release until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Therefore, the MOJ will investigate the questions of when, who and where funeral operatives can receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

The NAFD to send the PHE green book link to the MOJ and devolved governments.



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The ICCM asked whether the definition of frontline funeral operatives includes cemetery and crematoria staff, especially given that with mourner numbers ranging from 20-30 in attendance, the risks are increased. The MOJ will check.

### DMAG Closed Meeting

#### 1. Notes from previous meeting.

These were agreed and will be placed on the DMAG website.

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

The APCC asked for the CO to clarify if testing the new strain of Covid-19 will determine if there are more cases of asymptomatic carriers, if so, this means frontline funeral staff across the sector need to be vaccinated.

The NAFD had encountered care homes asking funeral staff to prove a negative test before entering the care home. This will be raised at the CO in respect to accessible rapid testing for FDs and this was supported by the CSGB.

Also, the requirement for modelling becomes more urgent to DMAG members to prepare their members for the surge across the regions and deploy resources appropriately. This is to be asked again at the CO.

#### 3. APPG (APCC)

JBP Associates will be invited to attend the DMAG meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January. Members are asked to consider responses to the CMA final report for the APPG.

The APCC will have their researcher advise of a range of constituent mapping software as a point to discuss on Thursday.

SAIF asked how the invoicing for JBP Associates would work. It was agreed that the NAFD would settle the account directly with JBP Associates and the NAFD invoice DMAG members monthly one seventh to each member (inclusive of the NAFD).



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## 4. AOB Round Robin

There were no items for AOB.

The FFMA will prepare the agenda and chair DMAG on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January.



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