

Deceased Management Advisory Group

Update 11th February 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on 11 February 2021, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Scottish Government (SG), and the Northern Ireland Department of Health (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. The Cremation Society chaired the meeting.

DMAG Wider Consultation

1. Ministry of Justice (MOJ) update

- 1.1. The revised guidance for vaccine eligibility had now been published. ICCM expressed their strong disappointment that the eligibility continued to omit cemetery and crematoria staff. This was disappointing given the large number of vulnerable mourners (which the eligibility seems to suggest it is trying to protect) that would be attending cemetery and crematorium venues every day.
- 1.2. SAIF queried whether there was any news on lateral flow tests being made available – MOJ is waiting to hear from DHSC on this

2. Scottish Government (SG) update

- 2.1. SG is waiting for confirmation on whether there will be an exemption from stays in quarantine hotels, for attendance at funerals and will report back once that information has been made available
- 2.2. SG hoped there would be a public message given tomorrow (or very soon) emphasising the need for the public to avoid excess numbers attending funerals

3. Northern Ireland Department of Health (NI)

- 3.1. NI reported promising signs with respect to hospital admissions/deaths numbers
- 3.2. NI are working on their public messaging with respect to excess mourners at funerals and are looking at whether churches might be engaged to communicate a positive message that it is ok/socially acceptable not to attend a funeral – and quite right to observe the rules – with emphasis being placed on other ways of 'attending' the service remotely



Deceased Management Advisory Group

DMAG Closed Meeting

1. Notes from previous meeting.

The notes of the meeting on 4 February 2021 were agreed and will be placed on the website. The notes of the meeting on 8 February 2021 will be agreed at the next meeting.

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

2.1. It was felt that there was a lack of 'energy' in the Cabinet Office meetings and perhaps this reflected the mood of the sector generally, after such a long time under pressure. It was disappointing that, having raised the issue of the future easing of restrictions, this was not covered in today's meeting. APCC emphasised the need to log all reflections on the success or otherwise of the Cabinet Office meetings, in order to formulate the 'lessons learned' stage of whatever review will follow. FBCA felt the APPG should be lined up to engage with the review process, whenever that is launched.

2.2. FBCA raised the issue of whether future DMAG meetings were necessary twice a week. It was agreed that these would continue under existing arrangements until the end of February and then be reviewed. The meetings would be moved to Mondays, if that was appropriate.

3. CMA Report

3.1. APCC felt that the dialogue with MOJ over the CMA report had been a constructive one. APCC had emphasised to MOJ that whilst the sector was still dealing with the effects of the pandemic, it would be unwise to add additional burdens on the sector.

3.2. FBCA felt that the reality of the significant work involved in implementing the CMA remedies meant that there was unlikely to be any substantial changes made immediately.

3.3. There was concern as to how the CMA remedies would be implemented with direct cremation companies as it was recognised that some direct cremation companies carry out more than simply collection and transportation of a body to a crematorium. Quality standards should be imposed equally across the board.

4. AOB – Round Robin

4.1. NAFD will enter DMAG for the 'Best Association Partnership/Collaboration' category of the Association Excellence Awards.



Deceased Management Advisory Group

4.2. APCC apologised that they would not be able to attend next week's meetings.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 15th February 2021 with ICCM chairing the meeting.

