

# Deceased Management Advisory Group

## Update 28 January 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); Welsh Government (SC); Scottish Government (SG) and Northern Ireland Government (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. NAFD chaired the meeting.

### DMAG Wider Consultation

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

- a. The MOJ updated DMAG on the work they were undertaking in providing the Government's response to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation report. MOJ reported that the response would be published mid-to-late March. A lot of scoping work had been undertaken by MOJ, and some one-to-one meetings with stakeholders were being set up.
- b. On the issue of policing large numbers of mourners attending funerals, APCC enquired as to whether the Home Office should be invited to Monday's meeting of DMAG. MOJ felt that this would not progress matters. MOJ had instigated enquiries with the Home Office on this matter and are chasing a response.
- c. NAFD enquired as to whether persons from Red Listed countries who were required to quarantine after travelling from overseas would be allowed to leave quarantine to attend a funeral. MOJ confirmed that they would.

#### 2. Welsh Government (SC)

- a. SC confirmed that 654 names of funeral staff had now been passed to health boards for the purposes of them being vaccinated.
- b. SC had discussed with Local Resilience Forums the issue of excess mourners attending funerals. Feedback was that none had taken place which required Police intervention.
- c. SC reported that guidance had been updated, to reflect that wakes were not allowed in Wales under the current lockdown. A more detailed revision to the guidance was currently in clearance. This more detailed revision would not result in any major changes in practice but includes references to the Alert Levels in Wales.



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## 3. Scottish Government (SG)

- a. SG reported that a letter had now been sent regarding eligibility for vaccinations for funeral staff. This excluded crematoria and cemetery staff. ICCM and APCC expressed extreme disappointment at this and outlined the risks of transmission faced by such staff given the large numbers of people they are in contact with every day, including many vulnerable people, and the operational risk to crematoria and cemeteries if there was an outbreak of the virus amongst such staff. SG stated that the position arrived at was the result of discussions with the vaccination policy team, who had emphasised the need to be clinically selective. The relevant risks were felt to be those arising from direct work with deceased people and being in hospital or care home settings. SG would circulate the general principles which were used to arrive at this decision.
- b. SG reported that the analysis to the consultation on the Funeral Directors Code of Practice would be issued on 9 February.
- c. SG reported that they were working on communications around other ways in which people can pay their respects to someone who has died than attending a funeral to help deal with the problem of excess mourners attending funerals.

## 4. Northern Ireland (NI)

- a. NI reported that over 700 names had now been registered for vaccination.
- b. On attendance at funerals, NI reported that there had been a high-profile funeral with large numbers attending. The Police had taken a low-key approach, but it had raised issues on the extent to which guidelines in NI were enforceable.

### DMAG Closed Meeting

#### 1. Notes from previous meeting.

These were approved for publication.

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

DMAG members felt that a disproportionate amount of time was being spent at the weekly Cabinet Office teleconference on updating attendees on case rates,



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hospitalisations, and the number of deaths, which was publicly available information. This left little time for discussion on the issues raised by DMAG. NAFD would feedback this to Cabinet Office.

### 3. AOB Round robin

The Cremation Society reported that Lord De Mauley had written to the Minister for Policing regarding the case of a funeral director receiving a £10K fixed penalty notice in Hertfordshire.

The Cremation Society also reported it is possible to attend the COVID testing centres put in place by local authorities for key workers unable to work from home on a frequent basis.

SAIF would chair the next DMAG meeting.

