

# Deceased Management Advisory Group

## Update 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

The members of DMAG held a video conference on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), General Register Office (GRO); Welsh Government (SC) Scottish Government (SG) and Northern Ireland Government (NI) present for the 'Open' part of the meeting. SAIF chaired the meeting.

### DMAG Wider Consultation

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

- a. The MOJ asked whether there was any further update from the funeral director on the proposed fine by Hertfordshire Constabulary. The NAFD advised that their legal advisors had written to the Hertfordshire Constabulary and given guidance to their members. SAIF had spoken with the Commander on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January and asked for clarity and assurances for funeral directors alarmed by this fine. SAIF asked Chief Constable Charlie Hall to take this matter to the NPCC (National Police Chief's Council) for agreement on national protocols to ensure consistent policing across the police service.
- b. The GRO (General Register Office) was invited by the MOJ to the meeting. The APCC raised the issue of some hospitals requiring sight of the 'Green Certificate', issued by the Registrar, prior to releasing a body from the mortuary. Any delay in obtaining the Green Certificate is resulting in delays to the collection of the deceased, potentially resulting in capacity issues at the mortuary. The GRO explored whether the hospital and temporary mortuaries should be included in a scanned email of the green form.  
The FBCA asked whether death registration continued to remain a priority during the coronavirus over birth, civil partnerships and marriages. The GRO confirmed this was the case. SAIF ask the GRO about delays to burials in NW England. Any specific districts with issues could be raised directly with the GRO.  
The conclusion to the green form question: the MOJ instructed the GRO to do a blanket reminder to hospital mortuaries and registration services of the current operating policy permitted by the Coronavirus Act 2020.
- c. The FBCA also asked the MOJ if the Law Commission (LC) is reviewing its programme of activities. The MOJ is in discussions on the next phase of planning with the LC in relation to the reform of Burial and Cremation Law.



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## 2. Welsh Government (SC)

The representative confirmed that the vaccine priority group is for those funeral operatives who attend the deceased at care homes and hospitals. These funeral operatives were deemed to be at the highest risk.

Funeral director names have been collated from the NAFD and SAIF by the Health Boards for administering the vaccine.

## 3. Scottish Government (SG)

The representative is in dialogue with Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRPs) to address excess mourners, particularly in the West of Scotland. A refreshed communication will be sent to the public in the coming days.

The NAFD asked whether there will be revised guidance issued by the Glasgow City Crematorium. Last week the Local Authority issued incorrect guidance that funeral directors were deemed responsible for managing excess mourners. The revised communication will be sent clarifying that funeral director responsibility is solely advising the client of the mourner number limit, not excess crowd management, and that funerals will not be automatically cancelled if excess mourners arrive at the venue.

## 4. Northern Ireland (NI)

The representative also advised that excess mourner attendance at funerals is a concern, especially among community groups. However, the PSNI are unlikely to act. The NI administration will be issuing communications to remind the public of the restriction to mourner numbers.

The SG representative offered to share their communications.

## 5. Update from the Cremation Society of GB

The CSGB Board representative shared the news that the Executive Officer vacancy has been awarded to the interim post holder who has been attending the DMAG. Congratulations were expressed to the new Executive Officer and gratitude to the Board member who will now stand down from regular meetings.

### DMAG Closed Meeting

#### 1. Notes from previous meeting.

These are to be circulated.



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

The ICCM requested for Thursday's CO meeting that updated PHE guidance be released soonest and also, that we have the PHE representative attend a future DMAG meeting as soon as possible.

The APCC asked that the state of play on vaccinations for crematoria and cemetery staff be clarified, since some CCGs are vaccinating crematoria and cemetery staff.

## 3. AOB Round robin

The FBCA asked if there is a table of funeral director professional fees. SAIF and the NAFD referred to Sun Life and Royal London, however, this data may not be suitable.

The FFMA will be chairing Thursday's DMAG meeting.

